

# The FORUM

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## 59th Constitutional Amendment

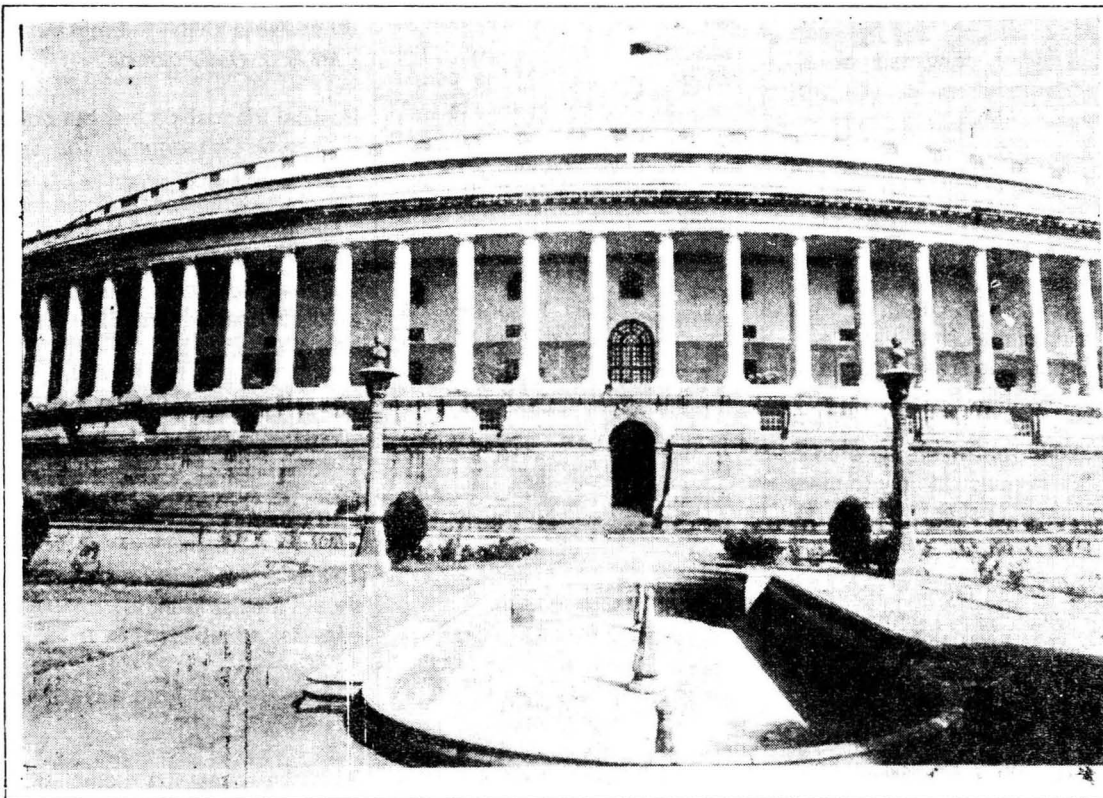
# Back To Emergency?

By Baiju

**T**he absence of restraint upon the existing social conditions which are essential in a civilized society conjures up the liberty of the members of the society. How far is it unembellished in the context of the 59th Amendment to the Constitution of the Republic of India is a remote plot line to compare with. Public disgruntlement at the Amendment has cold feet in thinking highly of the motive behind the Amendment. While some citizens are blaming the Executive, some are accusing the Judiciary and yet some others pointing their fingers at the President. Why all these? Is there no one responsible for this? Are the people afraid of another Emergency?

### The Supreme Court

**H**alf-a-century of relying on Supreme Court for justice has proved only the old Adam. Justice was denied not only because of delaying but debilitating the postulation of human freedom itself. The populace of the subcontinent are starving for novel deterrent action to save, at least, the rights which they gleaned from the state of nature.



Spacious public enlightenment coloured by a free and independent Press is the only system to arrest the unconscionable waxing of repressive laws.

### The President

**W**henver the citizens' liberty is transgressed, the 'freemen' have started pestering the President's interminable sleep. The prostrated Head of the State lends an ear to the visitors and retreats to the Land of Nod. The cycle continues. But, whenever the visitors are from the other camp, the President knows that he has to give his assent if he wants to remain President, what a pity condition it is! The Republic is at the mercy of a few chairlords!

The President himself was forced to sign his death warrant on 5 November 1971. The consequential Constitution (Twenty-Fourth Amendment) Bill, 1971, introduced in the Lok Sabha by the then Union Law Minister H.R. Gokhale added the new Clause (2) to Article 368. The words of the clause were as simple as "it shall be presented to the President who shall give his assent to the Bill and thereupon", but the impact was tremendous. The constitutional democracy was converted into a constitutional dictatorship. Its latest reverberation is the 59th Amendment. The President could not refuse his assent as the people's right had always been inferior to the Presidency!

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**A**t the outset, without going into the merits and demerits, I wish to state that I am totally against the National Security (Amendment) Bill, 1988, as it was bad conceptually and it was a wrong time to introduce it. It will serve no useful purpose. It will do more harm than good, and the

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## "Government Cannot Browbeat People"

minorities will feel more alienated. And with some justice it will be considered an interference in the religious practices. This Bill is an addition to the many black laws



that the Government have already made for Punjab. This will be as ineffective as others because you make them for people who are outside the law. The people who

suffer in consequence are the people who need your help, understanding and sympathy. This is going to hurt them most. As already declared by the Home

"The National Security (Amendment) Bill, 1988, is anti-people, anti-democratic and bad in law", revealed Gen. JAGJIT SINGH AURORA in a speech made in the Parliament. He also warned the government that the Bill as well as such other black laws would create greater bitterness, alienation and loss of faith in the government. THE FORUM GAZETTE is reproducing the dauntless and divulging speech.

Minister, this Bill will be followed by another Bill which will deal more comprehensively on how to keep religion and politics apart after further discussion and thought. If so, where is the need to ram through this Bill, half-baked as it is?

Secondly, the present situation has been with us for a long time in Punjab, certainly since 1982, if not before. There was a time when the Congress Party encouraged stockpiling of arms in the Gurdwara Mehta Chowk. If it is all right to stockpile arms in one Gurdwara,

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## The Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Bill, 1988

Though, we do not agree with the Bill as published on August 11, 1988, since it applies very serious curbs on the Sikh way of life governed by the combination of Miri and Piri (Temporal and Spiritual). The Bill in its basic sense is viewed as rapist of the Sikhism. It needs to be stated that the system of Miri and Piri is totally based on the secularistic and democratic principles. Under this very way of life, the Sikhs have removed slavery from India and injected sense of self-respect in all classes of Indian population. The equality in humanity and protection of honour of the country have been the guiding stars under the Sikh way of life. Therefore, great care must be taken keeping the overall interest of the country in mind that this base of Sikh way of life is not trampled, as this is bound to produce very serious resistance from the Sikh community.

However, in the light of the terrorist activities over a period of five years from the premises of the Golden Temple, the matter has become urgent to take certain definite measures to enforce even ordinary law to protect the life and property of the public, which has been under siege. It is also necessary to prevent disharmony coming in between the communities.

It seems the bill has been conceived under confusing circumstances created by the terrorists, who do not from any recognised political party of their own, nor any ideology within the framework of the Indian Constitution. Therefore, the need is to introduce such laws, which can take care of the terrorism, and not under misconception of the law and order requirement to the dis-

comfort of the registered political parties with their properly prescribed aims and objectives, which meet the constitution test. The country is already suffering due to misconceived partisan laws. We should not add to national agony with the introduction of any more bill such as the one under question in toto.

In view of all this, it would be very much in order to pass the bill covering the clauses 3 (b) to (i) and clause 4. Since under these clauses the entry or storing of any illegal arms/ammunition/explosive, etc. and for harbouring of any person accused or convicted of an offense, under law can be prevented.

The Government must not absolve itself totally of the turmoil prevailing in Punjab and as such not to entirely hold political parties (mainly Akali Dal). For that keeping this truth in view passing of the bill as stated earlier is bound to create fresh troubles in Punjab. This contingency can be avoided, if the clauses mentioned above are covered in the bill in question only to meet the genuine necessity of the situation.

Mr. Inderjit Gupta's observation "whether the term political activity, could be defined more specifically than had been stated in the bill", and that his fear, "this may give handle to local policemen to needlessly harass those in charge of religious institutions", should be considered seriously to eliminate the loopholes to set fears at rest. If this aspect is not corrected, then lacs of Sikhs and others as well managing their religious institutions will be standing in the courts throughout India, daily.

Yours. etc.

Dr. Harsarn Singh,  
New Delhi

## Defame The Nation Bill

The men who are at the helm of the state are always afraid of a free and critical Press. The people of India have seen why this is so in the last few months. The government is misguided and mistaken that the press in India can be harassed and muzzled.

The free India have journalists who can never be frightened, instead, every act of the government to tie the press will be proved foolish and it will come out exposing the skeleton and theft of the government.

Why the government was so hurry in getting the Bill passed in the Lok Sabha? Mr Prime Minister, did you think that the public reaction to the Bill would not be adverse and your motive would not be unexposed? The people and the Press are united, you can't impose such laws on the civilized life, rather you cannot steal any more or keep your theft unexposed.

Yours, etc.,

M.K. Rajith Kumar  
B 87 Tatyore Garden  
New Delhi 110 027

## This is it!!

By Sudhir Dar



## Sound And Fury

I am not averse to power but I am not crazy about it.  
- Mr S.R. Bommai, Chief Minister of Karnataka.

Independent India has entered the crisis of middle age.  
- Frontier.

In India anyone can become a leader whether he has been in politics or not, whether he has been in the country or not, there are 700 million people.  
- Mr Jyoti Basu.

In Marxist terms we now have a political class that is not only a class in itself but also a class for itself.  
- Jay Dubashi in *Organiser*.

I don't open my mouth unnecessarily.  
- Mr H.N. Bahuguna.

I will not rest till I find out who India's Richard Nixon is.  
- Mr Subramaniam Swamy.

What else is he (Mr Subramaniam Swamy) if not a Congress (I) agent?  
- Mr N.D. Deve Gowda.

Political friendships die, but political hatreds never.  
- Nirad C. Chaudhuri in *The Spectator*.

The President of India could be the worst dictator in the world.  
- Mr Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer.

There would be no greater insult to me than to seek re-admission to a political party headed by a man like Mr Rajiv Gandhi.  
- Mr V.C. Shukla.

The real issue behind the Ayodhya controversy is chauvinism vs tolerance; revenge vs goodwill; superiority vs equality; communalism vs secularism; Hindu vs Indian nationalism; fascism vs democracy; law of the jungle vs the rule of law.  
- Mr Syed Shahabuddin in *Sunday Mail*.

If Russia and China have no special status for their minorities, why should it exist in India?  
- Mr Balasaheb Deoras.

I never feel that I am a Dalai Lama.  
- The Dalai Lama.

Pondicherry may be a small place but we are not a small people.  
- Mr M.O.H. Farook, Chief Minister of Pondicherry, in *The Heritage*.

We may not be the world's best equipped railway, but we are one of the best run.  
- Mr R.K. Jain, chairman of the Railway Board.

Competence can make trains run on time but may not know where the trains are going.  
- George Bush.

We've removed the ceiling above our dreams. There are no more impossible dreams.  
- The Rev Jesse Jackson.

The creation of wealth to me is at the heart of things.  
- Mrs Thatcher.

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## NEWSHOUND

By Rap





## Double Standards

There are unmistakable signs of a political crisis developing. Two recent things that have happened in Parliament underline the point.

One is the introduction and passage of the Defamation Bill. The manner in which it was introduced and the haste with which it was adopted goes to show only one thing. The ruling party is unable to cope with the problems that are arising. In order to be able to do so, it is tending to become more and more authoritarian.

According to the latest Bill the onus of proving a particular allegation will henceforth lie on the man who makes the allegation. This is in total violation of what has happened so far. According to the law in force since the middle of the 19th century, the onus of the proof does not lie upon the man who alleges. This is expressed in the often quoted phrase: innocent unless proved guilty. This situation has now been totally reversed.

The thrust of what is sought to be done is clear beyond doubt. With the ruling party losing credibility in the public eye, it is left with no choice except to protect itself in the way that it is seeking to do.

While its motives are questionable, the ruling party might be able to get away with things like this but simultaneously it is doing something which is eroding its credibility even further. That is going to hurt it much more seriously than the passage of such bills and so on.

This is said with reference to the case of Ajitabh Bachchan. It was in July last year that the legal proof about his having a flat in Switzerland was forthcoming. The issue involved was simple. He was an Indian at the time that he bought the flat. Where did he acquire funds to buy the flat? More than a year was taken to process the facts, which hardly required any processing, and come up with an answer.

The facts uncovered go against him. Mr Bachchan's status was that of a tourist to Switzerland and not of a person who intended to take up residence there. Not only that he got permission to buy some foreign exchange in order to visit Switzerland on the ground that he was going there to promote his business. While the fact of the matter was that he had some kind of an arrangement with a couple of business firms there and it is they, as it is stated, who have helped him to buy the flat.

Nobody in his senses is going to accept this contention. This is where the business of credibility comes in. Things can be said and asserted and so on but then the issue is whether the public would believe what is claimed or not. For the next few months since he allegedly went to Switzerland, he kept on visiting India without the status of being a non-resident Indian. He continued to operate accounts in one or two banks. He also continued to be director of several companies registered in Bombay. Nor did he pay in foreign exchange when he stayed in hotels, etc. as required. In the eyes of law each one of them is a violation of what is called FERA (Foreign Exchange Regulation Act).

In a bonafide case these things can be overlooked and have been on occasions overlooked in the past. What makes this case special is because of his close relationship with the Chief Executive of the country. When someone so highly connected violates the law and is not pulled up for it, the inference is that there is one law for the common man and another law for those who can manage things. This is what undermines the sanctity of law. In this particular case, it should have been ensured that the law is applied

in a manner so as to leave no room for ambiguity. It is in this context that the objection of Somnath Chatterjee, the Communist MP, becomes relevant. He pointedly said it in the Lok Sabha:

*"But why not include economic offences? Why can't I allege FERA violations? Why can't I allege income tax violations; why can't I allege sales tax violations?"*

*Therefore, has this government any political honesty so far as maintaining this country free of economic offences? If they do not believe in middlemen and if they do not believe in commissions, they should accept my amendment - I say that offences coming under the meaning Clause - 13 should not include economic offences...."*

This is the point. The common suspicion is that so much evidence of manipulation and corruption is being uncovered that the government does not know how to cope with it. Its response, therefore, is to pass a law which would make any such allegation illegal. Complete evidence for the allegation made gets uncovered only slowly and gradually and sometimes not at all. But there have been so many instances for the last one year or so when allegations have been made and then, through the efforts of various investigators and the whole drama of concealment and disclosures, it has finally got established that illegal things had been done. None of these things will now be possible to be alleged and this is the point about the Defamation Act.

People are not going to accept the proposition that the Defamation Act is being brought to save the reputation of innocent people. On the contrary it will be believed that the said Act is being introduced to protect the guilty. With the impression spreading around the country, it is going to be exceedingly difficult for the ruling party to maintain its credibility. And that is the danger it has to contend with.

Only one member of the ruling party had the courage to protest against what was being done. He said most emphatically that if the industrialist Kirloskar could be prosecuted, why not others? Is it because they know the right people and exercise an influence to which they are not entitled? If this is the impression which gets around, sooner or later, it will sound the death knell of those who are now trying to perpetuate themselves in power.

### Thought For Fortnight

*Security for civil rights must be the same as for religious rights.*

*- James Madison*

## Akali Politics

# Moderates Vs Militants

By K.S. Khosla

It is too early to say whether the Badal-Tohra group will succeed eventually in capturing the Akali Dal and the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee but over the last six months it has been slowly taking up the challenge of the militants and the Khalistanis. The appointment of Mr Jagdev Singh Talwandi as President of the United Akali Dal and the reappointment of Prof. Darshan Singh Ragi as the Akal Takht jathedar marks a turning point in the policy of the Badal-Tohra group. In a way it also shows that all the moves of the government to prop up militants and eclipse the traditional Akali leadership have backfired.

One has to go back a few years to understand fully the implications of the present developments. The signing of the Rajiv-Longowal accord generated a new hope particularly after the deep sense of shock and despondency among the Sikhs in the wake of the Blue-star Operation. As Sant Harchand Singh Longowal himself put it, the accord marked the end of "an era of confrontation and beginning of peace." The confrontation has not ended nor is peace in sight. Both Mr Prakash Singh Badal and Mr Gurcharan Singh Tohra, who were ignored by the Centre while reaching an accord with Sant Longowal, were highly critical and had predicted that the accord would never be implemented by the Centre as it was not sincere. Much of the popularity of Mr Badal and Mr Tohra among the Akalis and the Sikh is due to the fact that they have proved right. However, at that time they did not oppose Sant Longowal and in fact agreed at the suggestion of Sant Longowal to have talks with the militants to find out what they wanted. But unfortunately before they could meet the extremists, Sant Longowal was murdered the same evening.

### End of the Accord

It was the beginning of the end of the accord. There was no Akali leader who could stem the rising tide of criticism against the accord described by some as a "sell-out". Nevertheless, the party remained united and fought the elections to the State assembly and won an overwhelming majority.

For the first time in the history of Punjab, the Akalis were able to form a ministry on their own strength. But the difference between the new Chief Minister, Mr Surjit Singh Barnala and Mr Badal and Mr Tohra were too deep and they stayed away from the ministry. The sincere and well-meaning Barnala was severely handicapped without the active support of the two leaders. Mr Barnala was left with the sup-

port of Mr Balwant Singh, known for ditching chief ministers.

The distance between Mr Barnala and Mr Badal and Tohra led to an escalation of terrorism in the State and there was not abatement in killings even after the appointment of the super cop, Mr J.P. Rebeiro. While Mr Badal and Mr Tohra started moving more and more towards the militants and sympathising with their cause, Mr Barnala started leaning towards the Centre for support. This became evident when Mr Barnala ordered the police to enter the Golden Temple in April 1986 to flush out the terrorists but the operation proved a big fiasco as neither any big terrorist was captured nor any arms recovered. The party split over the raid on the temple. Mr Barnala remained in power, though for a short duration only, with the indirect support of the Congress (I). Then came the detention of Mr Badal and Mr Tohra under the National Security Act.

### Handicapped Barnala

Mr Barnala could have succeeded without the help of Mr Badal and Mr Tohra had the Centre implemented the accord. But he was in store for one disappointment after another as commissions appointed under the accord gave verdicts against Punjab and expectations of the Akalis. A handicapped Barnala thus could not find a solution of the Punjab problem. The Centre then tried its strategy of sidelining the traditional Akali leadership and have talks with the militants. First, it was Mr Sunil Dutt, well-known film star, who came on the stage. He made a 2,000 kms padyatra from Bombay to the Golden Temple to talk to the "boys" in the presence of Prof. Darshan Singh Ragi, who was then the Akal Takht jathedar, appointed with the support of the militants. He promised to submit a report to the Prime Minister within two months but no report was submitted.

Then came on the scene Acharya Sushil Muni, who had lengthy talks with the militants and even reached an agreement with them. But he later regretted to say that his plan was sabotaged by "someone high up" in the Centre. The Muni withdrew from the scene and probably went back to the U.S.A. Prof. Darshan Singh also withdrew from the scene later when he failed to convince the "boys" to depend on "gal" (talks) rather than on "goli" (bullet). He deserted the high post of Akal Takht jathedar.

Then came Mr Jasbir Singh Rode, nephew of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, to fill the vacuum. He was appointed Akal

Takht jathedar with the covert support of the militants and the covert support of the government. He also did not last long as he failed to bring the "boys" back to the national mainstream. He lost his credibility after the successful Operation Black Thunder. The SGPC staged a coup by sacking him from the post and appointing Mr. Harcharan Singh of Delhi in his place. The cat was out of the bag when the government pressurised SGPC not to sack him and the other priests. Yesterday's seditionists and Khalistanis became persona grata with the government.

With Mr Rode gone, the group led by Baba Joginder Singh brought an unsigned letter from UAD president, Mr. Simranjit Singh Mann, ordering the dissolution of the party council and expansion of the presidium. This was immediately challenged by the Badal group as unconstitutional and Mr Mann became less acceptable to the Badal-Tohra group. According to one version, Mr Mann did so to secure early release but he has not played his cards well by supporting the group led by Baba Joginder Singh which is not that popular with the Sikh masses as before. The militants retaliated by killing the new appointee, Bahi Sohan Singh, head granthi of the Golden Temple and Mr Bhan Singh, secretary of SGPC.

### The Implications

Recapitulation of these events in brief was necessary to understand the implications of the present developments in the Akali and SGPC politics. It seems that SGPC, which is dominated by the Badal-Tohra group, has steeled its nerves to meet the challenge of the militants come what may. It reappointed Prof. Darshan Singh Ragi as Akal Takht chief and Mr Manjit Singh Calcutta as SGPC secretary. The Ragi was formally installed as the Akal Takht jathedar. The election of Mr. Talwandi as the Akali Dal president is a set back to the Baba Joginder Singh group supported by Mr Mann, Mr Rode and Mr Amrinder Singh. Mr Rode, though he claims he is still the Akal Takht chief, has not gone to the Golden Temple so far. It is reported that the Damdami Taksal is divided over support to him.

The Badal-Tohra group, accused at one time of sympathising with the militants, has shed its inhibitions and decided to meet their challenge boldly. Mr. Calcutta in a recent interview said that the choice before them was either to sit at home and let events take their own course or act even though it meant great risk to their

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# Back to Emergency?

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## Constitutional Rights

Article 21 of the Constitution provides that no citizen should be deprived of his life or personal liberty barring "according to the procedure established by law". What is clear from these words is that the personal liberty is not an absolute right as a citizen can be deprived of his liberty by a "procedure established by law". The "procedure" is established and re-established by the Parliament according to the whims and fancies of its members. The helpless courts can only see whether the "established procedure" has been followed or not, but no right to see whether the "procedure" is reasonable or not, against international conventions or not, against even the spirit of the original constitution or not.

## In The Name Of Security And Integrity

By using the mesmeric and irresistible ideographs - security and integrity of the nation - the citizens' right can easily be liquidated. On June 26, 1975, the great magicians used these terms to put the kibosh on the civilized life of the people of the Republic. With the suspension of Article 21 of the constitution during an Emergency, as proclaimed by the 59th Amendment and being a reversal of the 44th Amendment in 1975, once again we can easily project to the world that we have not progressed that much to learn a lesson from the two years' period since June 26, 1975.

The 59th Amendment to the constitution is definitely anti-life and anti-liberty. It is evident from all quarters that the need to suspend Article 21 even in an Emergency is zero. The government is already in possession of drastic powers if the motive behind the 59th Amendment was to put down terrorism in Punjab. Even in the absence of an Emergency, the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act of 1985 (replaced in September 1987) bestows untamed and perilous powers on the Executive. Then why this wantonness?

## People's Movement

At first even the national opposition left pray to the arguments. Most of the leaders failed to understand the dubious designs behind the Amendment. As it is widely believed that it was an Amendment against the Punjab, they simply kept mum - perhaps, religious consideration was also one of the reasons. But the fact is that it was an Amendment to the Constitution. It is not going to be only within the Punjab. It is a design which is aimed at even the next General Elections. Of late most of the opposition parties have realised this and have joined

the 'Emergency Virodhi Manch'.

On 8 August 1988 in a convention held at New Delhi, all opposition parties joined hands with civil liberty organisations to demand withdrawal of the 59th Amendment.

There is also realisation among most of the parties including BJP that the policy of treating Punjab separately will be counter productive. Only the government does not understand. The rally which was organised on 1 September 1988 signified the national concern for civil liberties and equal treatment to the people of Punjab. Almost all opposition parties, civil liberty organisations, trade unions, youth organisations and various other groups joined it to demand

the repeal of the Amendment.

In India we used to enjoy a greater amount of liberty during the British Raj. "One can only hope that the Supreme Court will seize the opportunity of a challenge to the unfortunate decision in the *habeas corpus* case (ADM Jabalpur) to reverse it, at least to restore to the people the rights (to life and liberty) that the detenus and others enjoyed in British days", said F.S. Nariman measuring the horrendous power the Centre is enjoying without even the 59th Amendment. One thing which has emanated from the impediments legislated by the Parliament since Independence is that the people are left all alone when their life and liberty are in danger. Spacious public enlightenment coloured by a free and independent Press is the only system to arrest the unconscionable waxing of repressive laws.

# Govt. Cannot Browbeat People

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people felt, why not in other Gurdwaras, too. The Government did precious little in 1983 to stop the stockpiling of arms in the Golden Temple. Instead of this, the Government let it build up till 1984. It resulted in an Army assault on the holiest of the holy places. Since then Punjab has never been the same. In April, 1986, the Akali Government in Punjab was able to get back the control of the Golden Temple with hardly any casualties. While it was in power, it was able to keep control of it. It was the Government interference in the election of the President of the SGPC that has destabilised the situation again. After the imposition of the President's Rule, that situation started deteriorating. The matters were permitted to deteriorate during the President's Rule in 1987 and early part of 1988 when Operation Black Thunder had to be launched again. The next point I have is: why could not this Bill be brought up when the Parliament was in session?

It is usual, to create a fait accompli, an Ordinance is issued and it is left to the Parliament to rubber stamp the Ordinance as a Bill which becomes another Act. No realistic discussion can take place when the matters are already settled. I find that the Government is always trying manipulative tactics. If I am not mistaken sufficient legal authority already exists with the Government to ensure that illegal arms are not carried or stockpiled in religious places. The problem lies in not taking timely action. Laws against sedition are applicable everywhere. Religious places give no particular sanctity. I do believe, however, that there can be no two opinions that the religious places must not be used to give haven to anti-social and anti-national elements and criminals. For this the

laws at present are sufficiently strong to deal with them. The clause to which I have the greatest objection is the use of religious institutions for the promotion or propagation of any political activity. This can have very wide ramifications. Logically all religious and political parties should be disbanded before a Bill of this nature can be introduced.

Furthermore, very strict conditions must be laid down for the so-called secular parties not to exploit religious sentiments inside or outside the religious institutions. Above all, the Government in power must not use its authority to interfere with the functioning of religious institutions by covert or devious means. In this regard, the record of the Congress Government over the years is anything but honourable. In 1925, success against the British in the Gurdwara movement was a victory for the Indian Independence. It was lauded by the Father of the Nation himself, who, of course, had never believed that religion and politics can be separated. Today unwanted restriction and interference in the functioning of the Gurdwaras is being justified as a secular step or is being justified as an anti-terrorist step. I am sorry to say that this is not going to help matters. Many a time the Congress Party in the Punjab has tried to put up their own candidates for the SGPC elections with little success. Having failed to make inroads, now a facade of this Bill is being created. Whenever the Government fails to achieve successful results, recourse to a new Bill is taken to hide its failures and incompetence. Recently, very strong arm methods have been used by a group of so-called Youth Congress (I) members to take over the Sisganj Gurdwara and an

effort to take over the Banglaskhib Gurdwara is nothing less than hooliganism. The so-called Panthic party under a new individual has suddenly been resurrected which was under suspended animation after the last leader got the General Sales Agency of the Air India in the United Kingdom. Can these shenanigans create confidence in the minds of a minority which has been under pressure for the last several years, which has received no justice, but much adverse propaganda at the hands of the State-controlled and State-influenced media?

For a moment, let us take a look at the other minorities, the Muslims. Do you expect them not to discuss the Babari mosque and the Ram Janam Bhoomi tangle after their Friday prayers? Who is responsible for permitting this situation to reach the present explosive stage? It rests squarely on the Government's shoulders for not acting honestly and in time.

In India, all religious institutions also act as community centres, more so for the Sikhs because according to us it is Sangat and Pangat, which means that people stay back to have *langar* after all important functions. In any case, for the Sikh religion, it is a *Miri* and *Piri* tradition and restrictions on it will be considered interference in the religion. My worthy friend earlier said that *Miri* and *Piri* by the Sixth Guru meant that these were to be kept separate because discussions were held in the Akal Takht and not in the Golden Temple, but the Akal Takht is also a Gurdwara. The other point is that main aim of the combination of politics with religion, the Sikh religion, is that politics works under religious precepts and standards and that means cleaner politics. That is what we have not been able to achieve in India so far. I can assure you that this Bill, as it stands, will create greater resentment and greater alienation.

I wonder if enough thought has been given to the implementation of this Bill. If its implementation is unimaginative, as is likely to be, it can cause untold harassment to poor innocent people involved in the management of the Gurdwaras. If militants descend on it without warning and capture the stage, the management dare not object because the Government has not been able to deal with the terrorists adequately. Afterwards, the police will land up to make an enquiry and may or may not prosecute the manager or any other member, depending upon the police whims and fancies, and what their fancies are, we already know. I maintain that by bringing forward this Bill, the Government has virtually created a police State which, for a democratic form of Government, is highly objectionable. I wonder if the Government has even now realised that in spite of these draconian laws and massive efforts over a prolonged period, why it has failed to achieve any worthwhile results. Two things stand out. One is the unimaginative policy of treating the Sikhs and

the Punjab problem as a purely law and order issue. The Government who claims to stand like a rock, certainly does not use its grey matter when dealing with human or humane problems. A Government which calls rigidity and inflexibility as determination, is bound to cause horror and harm rather than find ways and means of meeting people's aspirations and winning their confidence.

Secondly, discrimination in the application of the same law under similar circumstances for different people is another factor which has created a doubt in people's mind whether they are being treated alike. If Bal Thackeray created communal hatred, Government does not touch him and justify it by saying that the Government does not want to make him a hero. Under this Bill, if a manager fails to stop a militant from making some objectionable remarks, I am sure, he will be taken to task and put in jail.

Thousands of people were killed in the November 1984 carnage but none has been punished so far. The Government has used every stratagem to see that the culprits are not brought to book and tried. But when those people who believe in justice and human rights got together and produced a courageous and honest report, they were dubbed as Kangaroo courts, even amongst the Sikhs, some are favoured and others are given harsher punishment for the same action. The Punjab Government had very generously decided to release some Akali leaders on the Independence Day while others are still incarcerated though they were taken into custody for the same infringement of the law.

You never tire of making new laws. But the rule of law has become a casualty. Political expediency reigns supreme. Human rights and Fundamental Rights are being trampled under foot with impunity. It is said that clichés are to politics what leaks are to journalism; the life force. No wonder, the politics of manipulation is the life-blood of this Government. This may pay dividend temporarily but it cannot solve the basic ills of our nation. You are going to upset and grievously hurt the common man who has so far not supported the separatist movement nor lost faith in communal harmony. And this Bill is supposed to safeguard these things! I would earnestly urge the Government to withdraw this Bill and not to vitiate the political and communal atmosphere.

My objection to this Bill very briefly is that it is anti-people, anti-democratic and is bad in law. It leads to malpractices. It enables the Government with its manipulative propensities to destabilise Punjab instead of settling it and this is done to serve its own Party's interests and not that of the people or the country. This Act has been in being since 1980 when Mrs Gandhi came back to power. I wish an analysis is done now to

Continued on page 13



# Bankruptcy Of Statesmanship: Punjab And The Country

By Bhagwant Singh Dalawari

**T**his is a tearful note. Tears of blood mourn the dishonesty, chicanery and hoodwinking that mark the policies of the Central Government which lead the Nation to darkness. And heart-rending shrieks arise within the heart to mourn the bankruptcy of leadership. As a Sikh I cry for the Sikhs and as an Indian I cry for the nation. Are we heading towards a Civil War? Is the present Government of Rajiv Gandhi putting a permanent cauldron in which it wants the Sikhs to boil themselves and, to hide its own national mistakes, wants the nation to divert its attention from the tragedy in which Punjabis have lived for many years to Pakistan's misdeeds. Let us face it. The policies of the present Government will land us in trouble with the Sikhs for many decades and the follies of the present Sikh leadership drenched in selfishness will sound the death-knell of purity that is Sikhism. Indeed from the ashes will arise the selfless Khalsa free from fundamentalism but devoted to the welfare of humanity and I am optimistic that when the present Government is buried, the nation will strengthen itself to ensure the rule of law which was our pride. Alas! Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi have cheated the nation of its SATYAMEV JYATE and have led it on the garden path making Sikhs the whipping boy.

ea. No Government can afford to confront the whole community because of the misguided few. For the present mess the Central Government is primarily responsible not only is Punjab but also in relation to the general situation in the country. Corruption symbolised by Bofors, HDW, ONGC and other scandals stares into the faces of my countrymen, Mughal-type AYASHI governs the acts of our rulers, senseless alienation of our own countrymen and deliberate untruth and mismanagement are the labels which are permanently fixed to the Government's face.

No one objects if the Government takes the strongest measures against the terrorists or secessionists but to put the whole nation and keep the Sikhs, on their toes is bound to boomerang. Indeed the secessionists should be dealt with severely but where is the need to deliberately show State terrorism in such a way that even the most innocent among the Sikhs are treated harshly, some of them killed, others abducted and shown in fake encounters. This will dearly keep the embers burning and, come what may, will keep India in the boiling-pot. Do we want this? This may be in the

interest of tottering rulers but this can never be in the interest of our country, whose millions suffer not only on account of their proverbial poverty but also because of the pernicious sense of ownership of India as a fiefdom which has enveloped our rulers.

There is no doubt that Akalis have contributed handsomely to the pursuit of Government's policies and have done everything to burn their own boats and those of the Sikh community. If the Central Government is blind to its follies in letting the country go down the drain, the Sikh leadership has been and is responsible for the present degradation of the Sikh community. The Government is indeed playing with fire in ignoring the sentiments of the entire Sikh community and keeping the Golden Temple under its control. At the same time Sikh leadership is showing no sense of cohesive responsibility at the critical time with the result that both the Sikhs and the country are bound to suffer. The wounds now being inflicted by the Government will come home to roost.

It is unfortunate that we, the Sikhs, have no good leaders but the Central rulers who themselves live in glass houses have no business to throw stones at them. Let me begin from the beginning. If they plead for separation of religion from politics, Congress had no business to use Bhindranwale for political ends in Punjab. Again, when he became a monster for them, the Central Government had no business to storm the Golden Temple, symbol of Sikh resistance to the atrocities of the Mughal, Afghan and British tyrants. I remember I wrote articles, letters including an open letter to Bhindranwale, criticising his actions and protesting that we were not his Sikhs and Guru Gobind Singh never would have asked us to do things that he was telling Sikhs to do. But when the Central Government attacked the Golden Temple, I had said that:-

*Mrs. Gandhi had fallen into the trap of Bhindranwale;  
Nation will regret this for years and decades;  
Golden Temple did not belong to Bhindranwale but to all Sikhs and all our countrymen.*

However, even after this foolish, unstatesmanlike and plainly mad act of taking on the entire Sikh community, if the Government had quickly healed the wounds, shed its chicanery, perhaps the damage would have been controlled. In point of fact, all falsehood, all kinds of propaganda and all anti-Sikh feelings were paraded. The murder of Mrs Gandhi followed

this tantalising alienation of the Sikh community. While there was every justification to take action against those who had indulged in murder, the wholesale anti-Sikh carnage organised and encouraged by the ruling party throughout the country planted the sense of injustice among the Sikhs. These foolish leaders and rulers

began indulging in the most foolish acts of killing of innocent people, first Hindus then both Hindus and Sikhs. Wrong, inhuman and bad as these acts have been, Government could not take advantage of the revulsion even among Sikhs against such acts because of its own loss of credibility on account of the following



Gurbax Singh's two teenaged sons are still behind bars in Jodhpur Jail, though they were casual visitors to the temple

not only did not do anything to remove this alienation but continued to divide the Sikhs, raise anti-Sikh pleas during the elections used Woodrose operation for wholesale repression of the Sikhs. The youth in the Punjab were so much alienated that they began feeling that there was no honourable living for them in the country. The Sikhs outside Punjab had already suffered untold miseries.

Rajiv-Longowal Accord, perceived to be a document of relief, has now become a dead letter, thanks to the cheating of Rajiv Government. The youth who had never accepted the Accord became certain after 26th January 1985 that Government was insincere and dishonest. They

misdeeds on its own part.

(1) Farce of the Mishra Commission and farce of follow-up action—not a single person has been prosecuted for the admitted murder of nearly 3000 Sikhs in Delhi.

(2) Continued incarceration of most of the Sikhs picked up from the Golden Temple in 1984 without trial.

Thus, while the Sikh community vehemently condemns, the barbarous acts of the misguided Sikhs and is fed up with them, it cannot look at the Central Government's actions with approval because of the following:

(1) Central Government's actions are like State terrorism and

torture many innocents along with real terrorists;

(2) There is a wide gap between what the Government says and what it does;

(3) While opposing mixing of religion and politics, Central Government takes every opportunity to exploit religion for its own use. Witness Delhi gurdwara goings-on with the help of Congress (I) goondas and Congress (I) Sikhs.

(4) Use of every media resource to malign the Sikhs and hurt their sentiments.

(5) Control of the Golden Temple.

Black Thunder was not very much resented but the euphoria connected therewith is definitely misplaced. I do not think the Sikh community will ever forget the humiliations being heaped on them by the present rulers and not only the Sikhs but various well-meaning human rights organisations have stood by them in their trials and tribulations. It is only the Central Government which has failed the nation.

The tragedy of the Sikh leadership is indeed deep and heart-rending. The legacy of Guru Gobind Singh's purity in the form of saint-soldier is totally missing. Those who have ruled us as Sikhs or Akalis have never been Sikhs in reality. They have been using their jathedarship of the Gurdwara Committees for political hoodwinking and have never practised the principles of Sikhism in day-to-day life so that their inner strength, i.e. *Aimak Bal*, would have increased, they would have come out with flying colours as Sikhs and they would never have let hatred enter

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# Marriage And Communalism

By Asghar Ali Engineer

**The forcible remarriage of a Hindu girl because she had earlier married a Muslim of her own free choice in Palwal town in Haryana may have been a small incident, but it is indicative of a major trend in our political culture.**

**C**ommunalism can take very weird forms in this country. Even an inter-caste or inter-communal marriage can lead to communal tension or a communal riot. What happened recently in a town called Palwal in Haryana is a proof of this. Not that it has not happened before. Every such marriage in the middle and lower middle classes leads to some measure of communal tension. Of course, it is a little different with the upper classes. Inter-communal marriages will take place in these classes with all fanfare and no one would utter a word. They may even be hailed as an 'example of communal amity'.

Haryana is supposed to be a comparatively quiet place as far as communal disturbances are concerned. There have not been many major riots there since independence. One reason may be that very few Muslims had been left there after partition. Muslims there, those who are left, have posed neither economic or political challenge to the Hindus. However, the recent by-election there was a different story.

Tyeb Husain, a longstanding Congressman, deserted his party and joined the Lok Dal of Devi Lal. Tyeb Husain, needless to say, has a good following among the Meo Muslims in Haryana (in Haryana most of the Muslims are of Rajput origin and are known as Meo Muslims). Khurshid Ahmed, the education minister of Haryana, was fielded for the Lok Sabha seat from Faridabad by the Lok Dal while the Congress (I) fielded J.P. Nagar, a political light-weight. However, the Congress conducted its election campaign purely on communal lines. The Congress campaigners admitted that they had employed RSS workers for the campaign.

The Congress campaigners told the electorates in Faridabad, "We have given you a Hindu candidate for the first time in 25 years and if he loses, you shall never have any Hindu representing this constituency. Make sure he wins and breaks the Meo monopoly in this seat". This was the 'secular' Congress (I) campaigning in the Faridabad constituency. It is the politician who thoroughly communalises our otherwise normal

atmosphere. No wonder then what happened recently in Palwal, Haryana.

A Muslim property dealer Abdul Aziz was having an affair with Raj Rani, daughter of an Arya Samaji of Palwal. Their marriage was properly registered in the office of the registrar of marriages in Delhi. Their love affair was widely known. According to one newspaper report, "numerous tales of their undying love are told by those haven't seen the face of either of the two". Not only that, it is alleged that Abdul Aziz was giving the girl's family a sum of Rs.2,000 every month.

Despite all this when the news about Raj Rani's marriage with Abdul Aziz spread, there was a communal tension in Palwal: It brought about a division between the Hindus and Muslims of Palwal. The 400 Muslims of that town now live in fear of being attacked. The town has a population of well over 50,000. Fateh Mohammad, a Muslim of Palwal said bitterly that "because of this woman our religious places were burnt. A large crowd looted and then set on fire the shop of a member of our community on July 17 and the police merely looked on". Fateh Mohammad was supported by 40 other Muslims present in the mosque.

What was worse, the local Arya Samaj held a meeting to condemn the marriage and decided to remarry the girl to a Hindu boy. There was so much enthusiasm that four Hindu boys were ready to marry her though she had had affair with a Muslim. Ultimately the die was cast in favour of Mohan Lal, a tea shop owner and the girl was duly 'remarried' to him. The police did nothing to prevent the marriage though it very well knew that Abdul Aziz had married her legally in the Tees Hazari Court, Delhi. Not only that it did not prevent the remarriage, the police began looking for Abdul Aziz who had to go underground to evade arrest. Daya Singh, the additional superintendent of police had no answer to why the police behave in this manner.

It speaks volumes of our social backwardness that we cannot tolerate an inter-caste or inter-communal marriage and the law

and order machinery takes sides with rank communalists. Here the authorities took no action even when the girl was forcibly remarried. This may have been a small incident in a small town in Haryana. But it is indicative of a major trend that has set in in our political culture. Our politicians, our administration, our law enforcement machinery are all quite willing to surrender to fundamentalism. The trend, of course, has been set by politicians. Earlier at least the secular parties used to resort to exploiting communal sentiments in a subtle way. Now they do so in such an unabashed way that it becomes difficult to distinguish them and the communal parties. Resorting to communal propaganda constitutes a malpractice under our electoral law. But when blatant communal propaganda is carried on, as in the Aurangabad municipal elections, or in the Udhampur, Faridabad and Allahabad by-elections, one thinks of challenging it in a court of law. Who will? Everyone is guilty.

If we have to maintain the integrity of our country, if we have to build up a modern democratic political culture, if we want to promote secular values, we should not take the Palwal marriage incident lightly. Without respecting

individual rights we cannot build a democratic culture. If an individual's decision to marry a person from another community leads to a serious communal problem, it is high time we think more seriously than we often pretend to do as to what is wrong with our attitudes. Those affiliated to political parties cannot do this for obvious reasons. Only independent activists can muster courage to do that. It is only independent activists who

have taken up unpopular causes like sati, environmental pollution, women's rights, etc. Here, too, only independent activists can intervene effectively and help raise public consciousness. The case of the forcible remarriage of Raj Rani should be taken up by feminists groups as well.

(Courtesy:  
Economic and Political Weekly).



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# Baliapal Test Range: People's Struggle For Survival

By Kavaljit Singh

**Q**uite often, the Government's choice of various project sites is devoid of human considerations and lead to human misery. The decision of the Government of India to establish the National Testing Range (NTR) project at Baliapal and Bhograi blocks in the Balasore district of Orissa is an example of this. In spite of serious protests by many eminent citizens to reconsider the decision, the government wants to displace nearly one lakh people from their traditional agricultural land and establish a ballistic missile base ostensibly to test the missiles that the country is now about to produce.

## The Secrecy

**T**he Government has maintained a great deal of secrecy about the exact structure of the NTR project. According to defence sources, the total cost of the project would be around Rs.4,000 crores. The project will involve 350 km. of the Orissa coast - from Baliapal in the north to Chilika lake in the south. Missiles with a range of 150-200 km. will be tested in the beginning and the radars would also have the same tracking range. The Nilgiri Hills, barely 35 km. south-west of Baliapal, will be developed as the central tracking station and Baliapal-Bhograi will function as the infrastructural and managerial core of the project. Meanwhile, construction work at Nilgiri Hills has already begun and an abandoned air-force base, constructed during World War II at Rasgobindpur, 35 km. west of Baliapal, is being renovated.

Baliapal and Bhograi are a strip of land on the south and north of the mouth of Subernekha river as it meets the Bay of Bengal. These blocks have the highest density of 441 and 538 persons per square kilometre respectively against Orissa's average density of 151 persons per square kilometre. Known as the granary of Orissa, the area has fertile agricultural land. At current prices, an acre of land costs between Rs.30,000 and Rs.75,000. Betel leaf, groundnut, cashewnut and coconut are the major crops. Fish catch is very high as the coastal zone is the least disturbed by naval traffic.

## The Magnitude

**T**o understand the exact magnitude of the displacement the Ganatantrik Adhikar Suraksha Sangathan (G.A.S.S.), Orissa,

affiliated to the All-India Federation of Organisations for Democratic Rights (AIFODR) send a team on a fact-finding mission to Baliapal and to submit a report to the nation highlighting the problem of the democratic rights of the people. The terms of reference of the fact-finding team were the following:

- To assess the human problem;
- To weigh the pros and cons of the proposed defence base; and
- To gauge the psychological problems of the uprooted humanity of that area for generations to come.

The team visited 25 populous villages of Baliapal block and held meetings with about 35,000 people in various gatherings. Prior to this visit, village-survey parties surveyed the area in advance, made an inventory of productive and valuable things and brought out a detailed report. The important findings of the report are given in the tables on page 15.

The above tables clearly show that the establishment of the proposed NTR centre at Baliapal is ill-conceived because it will adversely affect at least one lakh people who are dependent on this area for their livelihood. According to the report, the total loss of immovable properties such as land and houses and other construction would be about Rs.300 crore. The loss of income and source of employment would be about Rs.150 crore per annum. This figure would be much higher if the production and distribution system is taken into account.

## The Ecology

**B**esides, the test range centre will be disastrous to the ecology of the region. Although no detailed study on this issue is available, yet the on-going construction work at the Nilgiri Hills will certainly disturb the rich ecosystem of the hills.

The government has also drafted a lucrative land acquisition and rehabilitation proposal which envisages settlement of displaced people in model villages. According to the proposal, the model villages will be established within 10-15 km. of the range area. These villages will be provided with all basic civic amenities. Each displaced family would be given 10 decimals (one-tenth of an acre) of land for home construction, a

build-up home costing Rs.15,000 and Rs.1,500 for the transportation of household goods to the settlement sites. The proposal also says that jobs will be given on a preferential basis to every displaced family. The proposal contains many loopholes.

## The Compensation

**F**or instance, there is not provision of providing land to those families whose land will be acquired for the project. Instead, compensation in the form of cash will be given to these families. As a result, this proposal has received stiff resistance from all sections of people who are not willing to

accept cash compensation. They are demanding equal amount of land for the loss of their fertile land. As many villagers of this area put it, "What will we do with money? We will enjoy the fruits of our fields and trees for our life, year after year. Even our next generation will not have to be worried about their livelihood. The money will be finished in no time, even if they (government authorities) give us Rs. one lakh for an acre. We shall not allow them to take our land".

As far as the rehabilitation of people is concerned, people of Baliapal have lost faith in the state machinery. There are obvious reasons for it. Firstly, officials dealing with resettlement and rehabilitation are yet to join. Secondly, people have not been informed about their rights laid down in the proposal. Lastly, the past record of rehabilitation in the state is not satisfactory. The state government has so far shown more interest in land acquisition than rehabilitation of oustees. People displaced from various projects like Hirakund and Rengali dams are still wandering unrehabilitated. Even Mr. J.B. Patnaik, the Chief Minister of Orissa, has admitted in the state Assembly that after 11 years, 22,000 of the 30,000 persons displaced from the Rengali dam site

have not yet been rehabilitated. As a result, the minds of the people of Baliapal are occupied by fears and many of these fears are related to their resettlement and rehabilitation.

Moreover, there is a growing feeling among the people of Orissa that the Central Government is introducing sophisticated defence weaponry in the state. The NTR project would be the seventh defence establishment in the state.

Furthermore, the establishment of the NTR project has also evoked sharp reactions from anti-nuclear leaders and the intelligentsia. There are apprehensions that missile range may be used for nuclear purposes. As Mr. Dharendra Sharma, Convenor of the Committee for a Save Nuclear Policy (COSNUP) put it, "The test range is not meant for bursting fire crackers. It is meant for nuclear purposes".

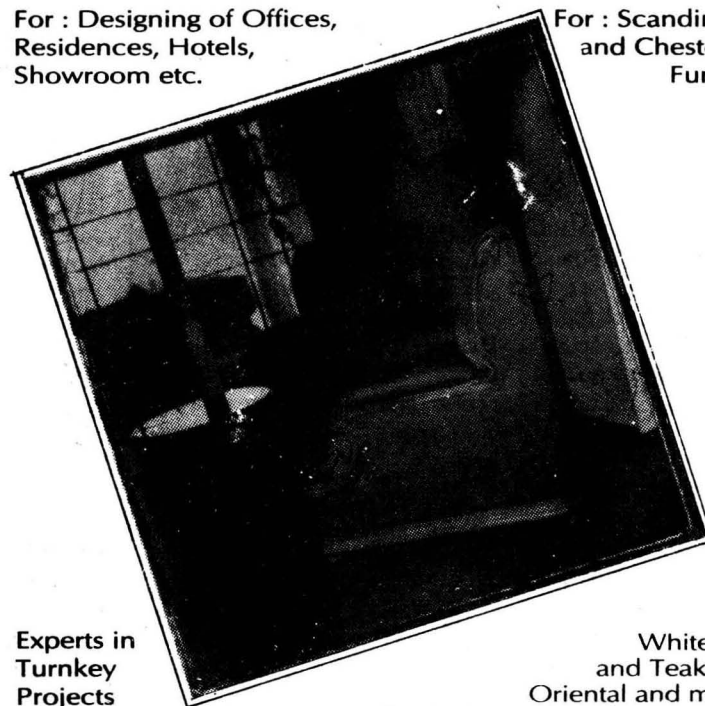
The first stage of people's movement started soon after July 31, 1985 when the Chief Minister, Mr. J. B. Patnaik told newsmen that a defence project would be built in the Baliapal-Bhograi area. In December 1985, a meeting of affected villagers of Baliapal-

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IMPACT



## WHAT 'THE TIMES OF

On June 19, 1988, the Sunday Review published by 'The Times of India' carried an article by Rajender Mathur entitled "The Pastiche that is India". Since this article raised certain vital issues with regard to the Indian polity, a comment on it was sent by Amrik Singh on July 6, for favour of publication. Even after several weeks the said comment has not appeared.

It is for our readers to draw their own conclusions. In order to project the contending points of view, both the articles are reproduced herewith.

## The Pastiche That Is India

By Rajendra Mathur

Those who talk glibly of a political solution in Punjab seem to think that the contradiction between theocracy and nationalism is friendly, and, therefore, open to conciliation. Because the two have coexisted like a peacock and a snake in the reserved forests of Indian democracy, our liberals have come to accept them as part of our pluralistic landscape, and have conceded to the theocrats a legitimacy they do not deserve.

The liberals forget that coexistence of sorts is possible only until the adherents of theocracy are strictly aware of their limits, and know that nationalism is sovereign and shall not be confronted. In Punjab the limits have been transgressed, and howsoever we may try to camouflage the outcome for the sake of hurt egos, theocracy has to beat a retreat, for we cannot accept a condominium of theocracy and nationalism in any part of India.

Those who are asking for Khalistan are not very articulate about their ideology, but their postulates cannot but be the same as those of the Muslim separatists between 1880 and 1947. The basic postulate of the theocracy is that democracy is unacceptable, because it apportions power according to numbers and it thwarts the aspirations of those who aspire to a "chosen people" status and who refuse to accept that a contraption as sullied as democracy has any business to choose people.

The Muslim separatists would accept a free, united India only if the logic of the Muslims being in a minority of 1:4 was totally negated; if as co-rulers of a free India, they could enjoy a power equal in all measure to that enjoyed by the Hindus; and if in case of a disagreement, they would exercise a veto and bring the machinery of condominium to a halt. Their postulate was that India could remain a united nation only if it accepted the attributes of the United Nations.

The proponents of Khalistan have taken to guns because they, too, find democracy similarly thwarting. Punjab, today, is, of course, a Sikh majority state, but the majority is not overwhelming

enough to turn it into a theocratic enclave within a secular India.

The Akali Dal, which has been the democratic arm of Sikh politics, could never win an absolute majority in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha before the Rajiv-Longowal agreement in 1985. Since all territory which could be won by exercising the democratic arm had already been won with the creation of the Punjabi suba in 1966, the Sikh theocrats had no use for it any longer. The formation of the suba has left behind some residual problems which the Akali Dal could have tackled through routine agitations, but they are unrelated to the future goals of the extremists who want the Khalsa to rule in Punjab.

The Akali Dal has been eroded by the extremists since Baisakhi 1979, and yet it has done little to prevent its own displacement, because for it, too, Khalsacracy is more important than democracy. The Akali Dal knows that if it made a choice in favour of democracy, there would be little difference between it and the Congress. For 30 years there had been continuous comings and goings between the Congress and the Akali Dal, and there is scarcely a Sikh Congressman in Punjab who has not had an Akali past. The guns have stopped these migrations, and the reason is obvious. Democracy, while appearing to divide, unites. The guns only divide, and scare away all those who have a wish in their hearts to unite.

In the last hundred years, India's mainstream politics has been acutely aware that the minorities often yearn for community-justice as distinct from mere number-justice, and it has done its best to accommodate this yearning in the pastiche of Indian democracy. From the Lucknow Pact of 1916 which conceded proportional representation and communal lists to the religio-lingual Punjabi suba of 1966, hundreds of events can be cited to bear this out. Of course, an array of facts can also be mentioned to prove that the Congress often tried to thwart these yearnings by asserting its role as the dominant political party of India. But then both these roles of accommodating and thwarting

have legitimately belonged to it.

It is because of this duality of roles that the Congress has been more accused of wrong-headed appeasements and confrontations than any other ruling party in the world. When in the labyrinth that is India it turned right, its critics would say it should have turned left; when it went straight ahead, it should have, of course, done a U-turn; and when it turned left there was no need to turn at all.

The Congress has had to play a dominant role, because there is no way it can run away from it. If for the sake of community-justice, it negates number-justice beyond a point, it negates democracy, and cedes all its ground to the theocrats, the casteists, the linguo-nationalists and so on. Thus, when it seeks to replace the Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu, it is not sinning. Respecting the identity of all streams and rivulets is one thing; conceding to them dominance over or parity with the main stream quite another. Swaraj surely cannot mean that the integrationists who are numerically more, be trammelled and hamstrung the most, so that their political profile does not hurt the sensitivities of those among the Mizos, the Nagas, the Sikhs, or any other group for whom exclusivism is a better guarantee of identity than integration.

When the theocrats find that demography is an obstacle, they want to use the gun to bring about a brutal transfer of population. They want communal riots. In Punjab, one marvels at the strength of the social fabric which has withstood without disintegration a decade-long attempt to engineer a holocaust. But one does not know whether and how much the fabric is getting enfeebled. Punjab has been for centuries the *darshani deori* of the sub-continent, the *langar* of diverse communities, the *sarovar* of its saint and soldiers. It has been a sword-arm, a shock-absorber and a sponge. It is this Punjab which the terrorists want to destroy, so that they may create in its place a mono-religious monolith.

To meet the challenge of Islam as interpreted by Aurangzed, Guru

Gobind Singh carved out of Hinduism a faith with a book, a guru, and a church, and a sword-arm was thus fashioned. For the sake of its identity, the sword-arm now needs a mission. But what conceivable mission can a self-absorbed, protean, polyfluent Indian democracy keep assigning to it? If we had in our midst a Hindu fascism with dreams of world-conquest, may be the sword-arm could have had a mission, and a tributary could have enjoyed the importance of the mainstream. But even here, democracy decentralises, and it can assign to no group or territory the exclusive privilege of being a sword-arm. Since India is one, all Indians shall defend it. But if there is no mission, shall the sword-arm stab the heart which pumps blood to it?

If there are fears that democracy would lead to the Hinduisation of minorities, they are unfounded, and for two reasons. Hinduism has no mechanism of coercive proselytisation, and if a minority cares for its identity, there is no way it can be absorbed in the corpus of Hinduism. Secondly, so long as we are a democracy, the day shall, perhaps, never come when the Muslim vote will not be important as Muslim vote, and the Sikh vote as Sikh vote.

But if the fear is that the multifaceted character of democracy is itself destructive of pristine faith, and that democratic pluralism is essentially Hinduism, one can do little about it. If this is the definition, western Europe has been Hinduised in the last 400 years, and Gorbachev, too, is currently busy Hinduising communism.

Fifty years hence, no religion of the world would be what it is today. Since the winds of change in India are blowing against the backdrop of a Hindu populace, they do not become Hindu winds. Or else we shall arrive at the proposition that Hindu reaction is bad, but Hindu progressivism is worse, because it is the demon Marich of Ramayana dissimulating as a golden deer.

The Sikh theocracy which shall rule over the Khalistan of its dreams shall of course not allow democratic freedom even to the Sikhs. It shall seek to regiment

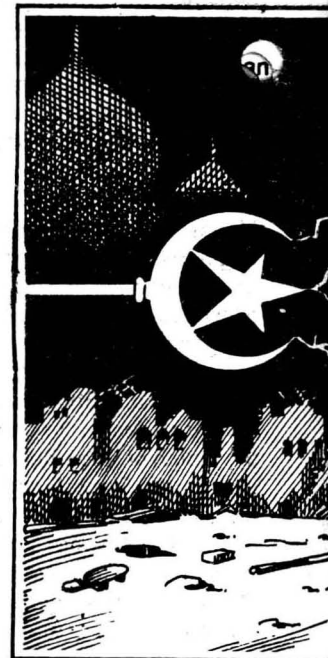
write today to express agreement with some of the points made by Rajender Mathur in 'The Pastiche that is India' published in the Sunday Review (The Times of India) June 19, 1988. What he said about the incompatibility between theocracy and secularism, the logic of democracy and his analysis of fundamentalism, deserved to be stated.

Where he goes wrong is in his inability to understand why all this is happening and how to cope with the problem. The use of the word 'pastiche' expresses the gross reality of India. India is unlike any other country in the world. Even Russia and China which come somewhat close to the Indian situation in terms of size and diversity are basically different. Both are, in a manner of speaking, empires and have been so for number of centuries. In both countries there is a dominant nationality. Their dominance is not only numerical, it is also cultural. If they are able to cohere together, it is largely because of these two advantages.

In India the case is very different. The Hindi heartland has around one third of India's population. In a few neighbouring states, however, Hindi is understood and in consequence if there is one language which is more understood than any other in India it is Hindi. This much is a positive point in favour of Hindi.

### Negative Points

But there are negative points also which cannot be over-



education, lifestyles, family more the government and the army along religious lines. The gun would be needed even after the birth of Khalistan, because Khalistan would be as afraid of Sikh democracy as Pakistan is of Muslim democracy.

The battlelines in Punjab are thus clearly drawn. This struggle shall decide whether India is a nation or a united nations, whether



# INDIA' DID NOT PUBLISH

## The Nation State Model How Applicable To India

By Amrik Singh

looked. One is the obvious fact that this size of the population does not entitle it to speak for the entire country. Secondly, in terms of the cultural tradition, while the Hindi speaking belt can claim to be the heartland of Hinduism, and Hinduism is the uniting bond between the Hindi speaking areas and the non-Hindi speaking South, nevertheless it has no distinctively unique culture nor does it have the range and richness which would ensure its superiority over the rest. If anything, this brand of culture is revivalist in its basic impulse and is not at all forward looking. Thirdly, it is the Hindi speaking belt, more than any other part of India, which is more illiterate and under-developed than the rest of the country. Fourthly, this is also that part of the country where social stratification is more acute than elsewhere with all that it signifies in terms of caste exclusiveness and so on.

Last of all, it was the Hindi speaking area mainly which was ruled by the Muslims for several hundred years. In consequence, the source of Hindu-Muslim cleav-

age which has bedevilled Indian polity for quite some time is to be located in this area. Whatever mutual mistrust and antagonisms are to be seen today originate, for the most part, from the unequal interaction between the Hindus and the Muslims in this particular part of the country. Unfortunately, the shades of this history of antagonism have cast their long shadow over the rest of the country as well. In that sense, a local problem has become an all India problem with results that have been profoundly unsettling for the whole country.

Owing to these and various other factors, a patently untenable situation has developed. In political terms, it is the people of the Hindi speaking area who are wielding power today. But in social terms, they are stagnant rather than dynamic, e.g. the heartland versus the rimlands theory propounded by the late Dr Lohia. Furthermore, in economic terms, they are unable to break out of the vicious circle of poverty and underdevelopment. And yet, they wish to continue to govern the country.

All this, therefore, creates tensions which express themselves in a number of ways. In constitutional terms, these get manifested in the tension between the Centre and the states. In ideological terms, these get defined into an issue where Rajendra Mathur can legitimately pose the question if "India is a nation or a united nations". The question is not without significance. It is a basic issue which today confronts India and upon a resolution of this issue would depend the future of the country to a large extent.

### Nation State And India

Where persons like Rajendra Mathur and others go wrong is in assuming that India has to become a nation state. This is a model which in my opinion is inapplicable to India. One thinks of France, Germany, Italy, etc. as nation states. These countries are relatively small, speak the same language, have a common history and, in the wake of the kind of developments that took place in the post-Renaissance period, got solidified into nations some two centuries ago.

But that is not the model which can be applied to the melting pot that is India nor is it the only model

that one should look up to. My own view is that India is so constituted that it will eventually evolve a unique model of its own. This will be unlike the Russian or the Chinese model. It will also be unlike the American model where they describe the country as the United States of America. What precisely would be the principal features of the Indian model is difficult to define today. But one thing is definite. There will have to be co-existence amongst the various religious communities and linguistic and cultural groups. Even ethnicity is a factor which will play a role in shaping future developments. Altogether thus it would be some variant of what is usually described as pluralism.

All this is possible and feasible provided those people who are smitten by the model of a nation state either change their outlook or cease to exercise power. Today, they exercise supreme political power, control the media (both electronic and the print variety) and it is they, more than anyone else, who have been guiding the destiny of the country for the last several decades. As Rajendra Mathur has noted, Punjab, today, is the battle ground of these contending viewpoints. What gets decided in respect of that state will determine, to a large extent, the future of the Indian polity. What I wish to submit is that the Punjab issue will not be resolved as long as the ideology of the ruling circles which Rajendra Mathur has expressed so lucidly and eloquently is not dethroned.

### The Punjab Situation

Another way of saying all this would be that whether anyone wanted it this way or not, Punjab has got pitchforked into a role where what it seeks to affirm is in conflict with the ideology of the ruling circles. In consequence, Punjab has already paid a heavy price in terms of thousands of lives lost and so much else that need not have happened. In that sense, Punjab is suffering today so that India may live. It is a heavy price to pay but it is being paid because Punjab has now got trapped into a situation where these problems will not be resolved unless there is some kind of a turnabout in the thinking of the ruling elite or those who do not accept the status quo are physically liquidated; and that is where the problem lies.

What is bothering most people, today, about the Punjab situation is the refusal of the Akalis to accept the status quo. The late Dr Satyapal once described the Akalis as the most indigestible element in Punjab politics. He was right. They are at the root of this problem. Whether others recognise it or not, the ruling party does it; each one of its moves is a testimony to that uncanny reading of the situation.

The terrorists are an offshoot of what the Akalis started. As happens so often in political life, the terrorists have come to acquire an autonomy of their own and today they act as they please. As is widely recognised, the Congress leadership induced one section of the Akalis to play this game of terrorism. Now both the ruling party and the Akalis are at the receiving end and though the ruling party is no longer directly in the picture, the Akalis continue to be in a state of uneasy relationship with them.

Without going into further details, what needs to be recognised is that what is known as the problem of terrorism consists approximately of three equal parts. These are fundamentalism, smuggling and crime and the role of the Centre. Rajendra Mathur refers to fundamentalism as an unmitigated evil. I entirely agree with him. Fundamentalism is a problem which will have to be tackled. But then it should also be recognised that it is a problem in almost every religion and in any case it will take a long time to get resolved. There are many factors which contribute to it and each one of them will have to be tackled.

### Centre's Role

What is unpardonable about the Punjab situation is the Centre's role in having aided and abetted fundamentalism, and continuing to do so. Had the Centre not acted the way it has been acting, the problem would not have assumed the grim dimensions it has. On the political plane the Centre's role has been decisive. It was and is equally decisive in regard to the second factor, smuggling and crime also. The terrorists are without question mixed up with these.

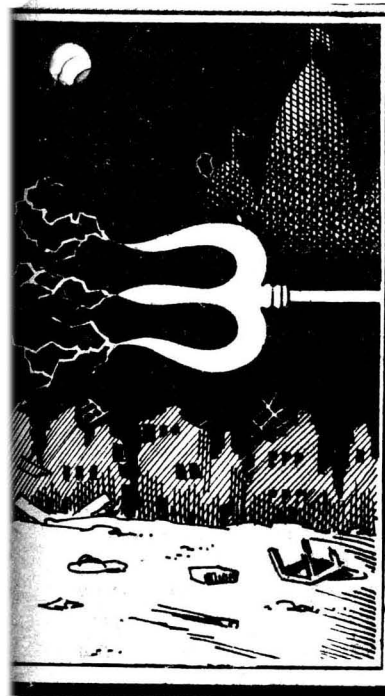
Even if one is prepared to condone the inability of the Darbara Singh government to have combated smuggling and crime during its inglorious tenure, did the Centre

perform any better between the dismissal of that government and the Operation Bluestar? Indeed, its subsequent conduct has conformed to that very pattern. On the whole, the Centre has kept the issue alive rather than allowed it to run its course. It is not without significance that not everybody buys the theory of the Centre being helpless and the terrorists being unmotivated disturbers of peace.

### Danger To Democracy

I have yet to see any piece written by Rajendra Mathur which deals with these issues in a manner so as to analyse the links amongst these various factors. May be, I am not well informed on the subject but the reason I put it this way is because those who think like him are worried more about the primacy of the Indian state than about the process which will lead to the emotional unity of the Indian people and the consequent outcome of a vibrant community called India. This is not to suggest that India will only be a community and not a state; that would be a contradiction in terms. What is suggested is that before India becomes a strong and stable state, it will have to become a community. Both objectives are equally important. To emphasise one and not the other is to work for an imbalance in the polity.

I am prepared to live even with this highly partisan point of view which Rajendra Mathur's contribution represents except that I find that people of his way of thinking are totally blind to another important dimension of the Indian polity. That is the danger to Indian democracy. The real danger to democracy is not from the bullets being fired by some misguided people. They can be and will be contained. That comes from the fact that the ruling party in order to stay in office has been using the communal card even to the extent of manipulating the state power in favour of a continued crisis in that unfortunate state. Unless this ugly reality is recognised, we would not have taken even the first step towards creating the India we dream about. Would Rajendra Mathur like to comment on this aspect, too?



It is a Pacific Ocean of tolerant communities or a camping ground of warring tribes, whether its democracy can resolve its contradictions, whether Punjab is able to retain the compositeness of its culture under the stresses of exclusivism, whether our mainstream can thwart and accommodate the sidestreams in due measure, and whether the great chariot of time shall be allowed to move on.



**A**s they both entered the discotheque known as "The Village", they felt it wasn't so dark today as on other days. In fact, there was something special about the pit in front that always looked like a circular well in which sometimes one played western tunes on the dischanger. Today, the pit was full. Four or five hippies stood there with their musical instruments. Perhaps a wee bit ago, the orchestra had played at full peak and completed a number. Now yet another number was in offing. While they had no use for too much light near the orchestra pit, the gay atmosphere of the spot had fully met with their approval.

They first proceeded towards the table on the left but figured that they would thus be confronting the orchestra and also exposing themselves to visitors' gaze. So they turned right and headed towards those cabin-like cubicles which has been partitioned with crude sack screens.

As the man inched forward, he flashed a casual glance at the adjacent cubicle. Now, who could that be? Looked familiar. But of course, it was Narula. He couldn't see the girl sitting opposite Narula but he promptly guessed—it must be Shama.

He pressed himself slightly to the right. Narula hadn't, perhaps, seen him. He sat with his back towards Narula and the woman with him sat in front of him. He felt the light over the pit was really a little too much or else he would have seated the woman by his side.

The orchestra was playing a fast tune.

He saw that the woman was watching him intently.

He smiled.

He leaned forward and asked her, "Do you know, who is sitting behind us?"

The woman opened her eyes wide to peep through the screen. She must have formed an impression of the images across the screen.

Narula's voice was coming clearly through. He was narrating an extract from some skit and the girl (Shama, perhaps) 'as giggling over and over again.

He whispered to her, "This man behind is Narula—of the Theatre Centre."

And suddenly the woman panicked, "Let's go. I don't like him at all!"

The percussion drum of the orchestra played loud and fast and other instruments joined in, too, in a wild music frenzy. Everything was drowned in the boisterous din.

He assured her more through gestures than through words that she should really not worry. Narula had not seen them. But he felt that the woman was really very nervous. He asked the waiter to serve cheese, sandwich and coffee.

She said, "Let's go somewhere else"

He asked, "Where could one go now, anyway! Offices are over and there would be crowd all over. It will be impossible to avoid curious

onlookers!"

He again felt, the woman was ill at ease.

"How come you have never been afraid of anyone? Why are you so perturbed today?", he asked her.

He saw her face harden a bit. She said, "I don't like this place itself. Is it a restaurant or a dark cave? And they want us to believe that it looks like a village! Huh! What a village! Everything here is frightfully awful... and how loud is the din and the clamorous noise today?"

Now perhaps the hippies were singing to the tune of the orchestra.

He began munching his sandwich. He thought the woman wasn't eating at all, she was only gazing at him.

"Why not eat something?" he asked her.

The woman tried to smile and applied the knife to her sandwich.

Before he entered 'The Village' he had felt hungry and had eaten ten paise worth of fried grams while he waited for the woman on the road.

Now he felt he was irritated that she wasn't eating at all. Her sandwiches—both cut and uncut—were still lying in the plate. She was only looking at him.

"Why don't you eat something?" "You please eat..."

"I'm eating alright but why don't you?"

"I don't feel hungry!"

"Okay! then don't eat," he said irritably and drew her sandwiches into his own plate.

"You never eat when with me. Look, your coffee cup is still full up," he complained.

She looked towards the cup. The froth of the espresso had settled down. She picked up the cup and sipped it once.

"Would we go on like this only?" she asked him.

He sipped his coffee, put down the cup and looked at her. The orchestra suddenly became louder.

They both were watching each other, none of them spoke. The din was too loud to allow any conversation.

"How else could we go on?" he asked her.

May be she didn't hear him. She just watched him. He wasn't sure either if she had heard him at all but he felt that he had already answered her.

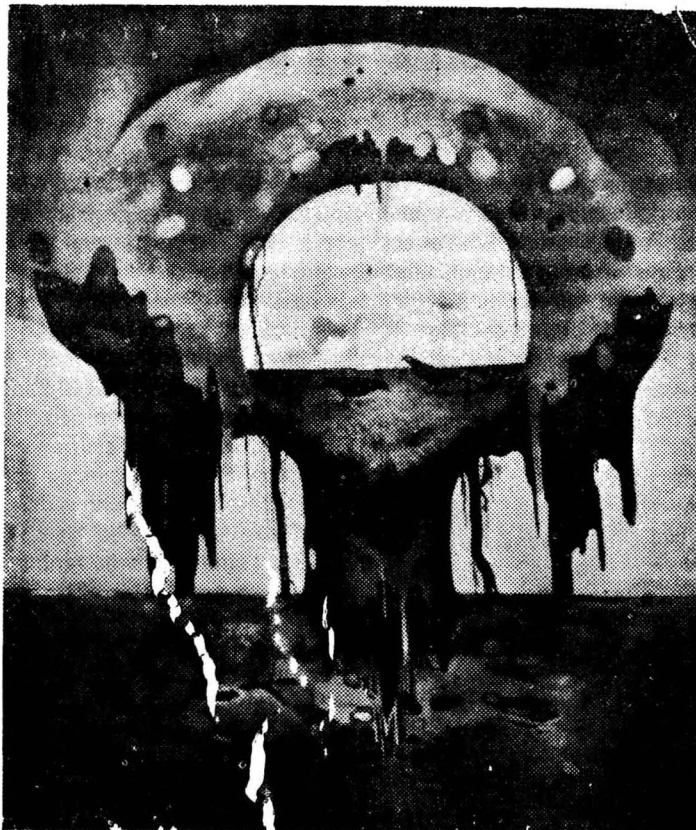
Neither spoke for some time. "Couldn't it be like this..." she asked.

"Like what?"

She was not able to express her thoughts.

# The Din

By Maheep Singh



"Tell me, what is it you want?" he asked.

She just would not speak. She only rivetted her gaze at him. He began sipping his coffee.

The voice of Narula and his girl friend could be heard—very very faintly.

And the orchestra also was playing a soft tune now.

"Couldn't I have you?"

He looked at her intently.

"Want to have still more of me?"

"Is that enough? Just a drop of water for the thirsty!"

"What more than this is possible?" As he asked her, the orchestra was again rising to a higher pitch.

"Is it not possible that..." and she again left it at that. She was pouching her lips in a manner as if she was swallowing something and was all the time winking her eyes.

"Alright, let me figure it out," he said. "You probably want to know why can't we get married."

She showed no reaction while she was still looking at him.

"Or may be you probably wanted to ask me if I could elope with you in some distant country where your husband could not follow us."

She kept silent and only winked her eyes and pouching her lips.

"Alright, if not that then may be you want to know if we both couldn't die together with the help of poison?"

She jerked a little.

"Yes, I do want to die but not all at once. Isn't there a poison that will bring me a slow death? No one

would know that I killed myself."

He smiled and said, "Yes, there is such a poison. Go on eating your meals and one day you could die of eating them."

"You think I'm a coward, don't you?"

"No. In fact, compared to you I consider myself a real coward."

He saw that her cup still contained more than three quarters of her coffee.

"Why not drink it? Why waste money?"

She picked up her cup and held it to her lips. He drank the last drop of his beverage.

The orchestra went up again, loud, fast and clamorous! Someone spoke to the woman from within her—her own daughter, whom she now heard in flashback, 'Mummy, you must bring wool on way from office.' Now she felt she was actually around those wool shops in Super Bazar and Janpath and she felt very uncomfortable—almost boiling.

"Can't understand what can be done really, but I can't go on like this either," she said.

The hippies were singing loudly. He looked in their direction. They were dancing while playing their instruments—three boys and two girls with their dirty clothes, dishevelled hair and long unkempt beards! They also shrieked intermittently.

He told her, "Listen, weren't you telling me on phone the other day...you said you would leave you kid with your mother...and then..."

"And then? Then what? You must think further," said she.

"Must I? Yes, why not?" And he has been trying to think but is not able to think anything meaningful. What comes to his mind over and over again is the thought of his purse in his hip pocket and the only currency—the ten rupee note—lying in it. He thinks that he would be left with only two or three rupees after having paid the bill. And he thinks that he will be back on his borrowing mission once again from tomorrow.

She was looking away.

The orchestra was silent.

Two pairs of hippies were dancing merrily with hands intertwined round their waists. One hippy was holding his hands high above and was swinging wildly.

Narula and Shama also were now quiet in their cabin behind.

She looked at him. She was continuously looking at him now. And when she looked at him she also spoke—and spoke the same thing again and again—kind of monosyllables!

The hippies had again taken charge of the floor and their orchestra steadily turned into a deafening din.

He said, "Listen...nothing can be done. We shall live like how we have lived all along. We can't bring about any change in this."

The drubbing of the drum was so loud that he wasn't really sure if she heard him at all. He, however, felt that he had to say and he was least bothered if she had not heard him. She was still watching him as before but now she was not speaking in monosyllables while she watched him. May be, now she was hearing something or may be, was only gulping something.

He noticed her cup was still half full.

She also looked at the cup, lifted it and gulped the entire coffee down.

The fast and loud playing orchestra now began to fade down.

They both were mum. They both felt that something was running past them, to and fro, something that was elusive, something that was unidentifiable.

The orchestra stopped. The hippies sat on the ground and stretched their legs.

Narula and Shama in the cubicle behind were mute. "The Village" was silent like a January night.

They both were looking at each other.

They felt—there was an infinite noise, a terrible din all around!



# Religious Institutions Bill Last Straw

By B.S. Mainee and Lt. Col. Manohar Singh (Retd.)

**From what has been happening for the last five years, a common Sikh has started thinking that various measures taken by the government in Punjab are designed to finish Sikh religion itself.**

**T**he Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Bill, 1988, strikes at the very foundation of the Sikh religion. The Sikh religion was founded by Guru Gobind Singh about 300 years back and it was ordained that a Sikh was to be a "Sant Sipahi" meaning thereby that a Sikh has not only to be a devout Religionist, but also a soldier implying his duties towards the country.

While founding the Sikh Religion at Anandpur Sahib the great Guru had not only removed the discrimination on the basis of caste and creed by including the members of various castes, and communities in Panj Piaras but also as a true democrat gave full powers to the "Sangat" (Sikh congregation) to take decisions on each matter, whether political, religious, social, economic, etc. pertaining to the Sikh community. The verdict of Sikh Sangat was binding on the Guru himself.

Guru Hargobind, the Sixth Guru of the Sikhs, introduced the principle of "Miri and Piri" (temporal and spiritual) and founded the great institution of Shri Akal Takht, which was to be the highest temporal seat of the Sikhs. This was the basic tenet of Sikh Dharma and no wonder that all major decisions affecting the Sikh Community, whether religious, political or social were invariably taken, after full discussions and consideration, at Shri Akal Takht.

It is common knowledge that when the freedom struggle was on, the Sikh community which made predominant sacrifices in the cause, invariably took inspiration from Shri Akal Takht and launched its agitations after "Ardas" (prayers) at Shri Akal Takht. As a matter of fact the Sikh way of life does not admit of the idea of separation of Religion from politics. Both of them are so intermingled that one cannot be divorced from the other without striking at the root of the Sikh faith.

Today's rulers cannot feign ignorance of the fact that various Morchas against Britishers by the Sikh community were launched from Gurdwaras generally and Shri Akal Takht particularly. The said principles of inseparability of

religion from politics on which the Sikh faith was founded was never questioned but was rather applauded expressly and impliedly by Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and other distinguished leaders of the country.

It is also on record that Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and other political leaders of the country had addressed Sikh Sangats in Gurdwaras on political matters not once but as a routine during the freedom struggle and even thereafter. Can anybody forget the supreme sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur which was a political defence against the then rulers to save Hindu dharma.

According to the Sikh philosophy, politics completely divorced from religion will go stray and ultimately lead to degeneration. The religion which teaches compassion, mercy, honesty, brotherhood, etc., has to be the guiding force in the politics and the States run by the God-fearing Rulers, as distinguished from fanatics, will be ideal States.

The main objections of the Sikhs against the aforesaid legislation is that it runs counter to the basic principles of the Sikh religion. The implications of the terms "manager", "political activity", "harbouring", "religious institutions" are so wide and fraught with so much risk of harassment, humiliation and peaceful person would like to accept the post of "manager" of a Gurdwara.

The Sikh Gurdwaras are the Institutions where everybody irrespective of his faith, creed, caste, etc. is welcomed day and night and served with food at lunger (community kitchen) and given shelter in the premises. The Manager shall always be exposed to the danger of being hauled up by police for "harbouring" and serving food to some one who was wanted by the police in some case. The Manager has no means to screen and detect him out of hundreds and thousands who come to the Gurdwaras and partake in "lunger" every day. The implications are simply unthinkable. Perhaps, the police and the Government will not permit a political party of the Sikhs to go to Shri Akal Takht and pray before launching their party or

taking some major decisions.

It is an established principle that the government cannot change the customs and habits of the people or their religious faith by just passing a law. Any improvement in the Customs, habits, religious view point, etc. can be brought about only by education and through goodwill but certainly not suddenly by legislature. Such a law will be honoured more in its breach rather than in observance.

From what has been happening for the last five years, a common Sikh has started thinking that various measures taken by the Government in Punjab culminating in passing the Religious Institution (Prevention of Misuse) Bill, 1988, are designed to finish the Sikh religion itself.

The treatment being given by the Government is like eliminating the patient rather than treating the ailment. The Government, it appears, has refused to diagnose the actual cause of the malice otherwise it would not have been difficult to provide the treatment which would be efficacious under the given circumstances.

The Government had been taking harsh measures one after another and aggravating the situation of the fact that the said thoughtless actions were alienating the entire community. The Operation Blue Star in which tanks, helicopters and Machine Guns were used to liquidate just one person and some of his followers, was ordered without caring for the sentiments of the entire Sikh community. The said operation was followed by Operation Wood Rose which further aggravated the freshwounds of Operation Blue Star.

This was not all, the action of the Government, in propping up Baba Santa Singh to repair the damaged building of Shri Akal Takht under the protection of Army Jawans, much against the wishes of Sikh Community in general added fuel to the fire. The massacre of Sikhs in Delhi and elsewhere, burning of hundreds of

Gurdwaras and looting, destruction of property worth crores, after the sad and unfortunate assassination of the then Prime Minister followed by hesitation of the Government to bring the culprits into book, resulted in complete alienation of the Sikh community. Under the circumstances the angry Sikh youth lost its equilibrium and took up the arms which is certainly against the Sikh tenets.

Recent legislation will prove a last straw on the camel's back, because it will give handle to local policemen to go on harassing and humiliating those who are incharge of Sikh institutions. The implications of the Bill are so wide and varied that it will be impossible to keep up the Sikh Mariadas as also to permit the Sikhs to follow the Sikh way of life as dictated by the great Guru.

**A** common Sikh feels that the Government in its anxiety and wisdom to defuse the situation in Punjab, should have been able to apply a healing touch rather than bringing these harsh measures which will rather rub salt on the lacerated wounds of the Sikhs and will further add fuel to the fire. It seems the Government has not learnt any lesson. With a view to liquidate a few persons the Government resorted to Operation Blue Star, which injured the sentiments of entire Sikh Community. Similarly, with a view to keep some unwanted elements out of Gurdwara the Government has brought out a Bill which will most probably not be accepted by the Sikhs Community at large. From what has happened it appears that neither the Government is honest in its attempt to bring about peace in Punjab nor its advisers are not fully conversant with the history of Punjab generally and Sikhs particularly.

We will be failing in our duty if we do not condemn the activities of some young-men who have taken to arms against our country, instead of getting their grievances

redressed through constitutional remedies. They may be against the actions of the Government and they may like to change the Government also, but they cannot think of damaging the interests of the country as a whole. The activities of the terrorist secessionists are certainly against the interests of the country for the independence of which millions have made tremendous and innumerable sacrifices. The Government may be against the interests of the Sikhs but the country as a whole is on the side of the genuine demands of the Sikh community. There is no dearth of Jethmalanis, Madhu Dandavates, N.T.Rs., Chandrasekhars and a large number of others, who have constantly been voicing the sentiments of the Sikh community in the press, platform and Parliament.

The Sikh Youth are, therefore, advised to abandon the path of violence and adopt constitutional measures for redressal of their genuine grievances. This will not only win over the sympathy of our countrymen but will almost certainly enable them to achieve their goal. It is a pity that a Sikh who is supposed to be a saviour of innocents and down-troddens is today being labelled as terrorist and killer of innocents. Those who call themselves as Sikhs have to obey the teachings of their Gurus and desist from committing crimes no matter how grave the provocation is. However, the bill being mischievous and dangerous to the over all interest of the country is condemned, as such, must be rejected by all.

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**I**t is war. It is a war for survival. It is a global war against the demons of the nether world. It is a war that the whole human race is fighting against an empire of evil, the empire of narcotics. Armies have rolled out to fight the war. Navies are seizing and searching marine crafts in an extension of the war over water. And planes rain fire and poison from the air to win the war.

Indian newspapers of late have carried extensive, illustrated articles about narcotic plants cultivation in various states. Almost everyday newspapers carry stories about huge seizures of narcotics at air terminals and seaports. Statistics say that drug addiction in the country is on the increase. Thus India, too, now has the dubious distinction of being a big producer, transhipper of this social poison. Brown sugar, sudinot tablets, opium omelettes and opium teas sum to be available everywhere if newspaper reports are to be believed.

If a drug is properly used under good medical guidance, it is a medicine and cures diseases. If misused, the misuse in itself becomes a disease. A drug is defined as any substance used in the composition of a medicine. A narcotic on the other hand is something that produces stupor, sleep, euphoria, hallucinations,

loss of neuro muscular co-ordination, etc.

#### Changing Scenarios

**E**arlier the tropical jungles of Burma and Siam were the main growers of narcotics plants. Gradually, as profits grew, shadowy characters all over the world became either growers or dealers in the nefarious drugs. Now the northern littoral states of South America, the isthmus connecting the two Americas and a few western states of the U.S.A itself, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and Iran have emerged as the major producers. The drug barons possess enormous economic power and political clout. They can transfer their field of operations from one place to another within a short time—a few hours—making arrests and prosecutions almost impossible. They can even topple governments; why, they can even take over governments as it happened in Panama. It is now known that 12 new drug refineries were set up in Pakistan's northwest in the first three months of 1988.

#### Unholy Trinity

**A**n unholy trinity, consisting of narcotics, terrorism and smuggling does exist. Drug

from one state to another, passing for a needle hid in a haystack.

World production of narcotics is estimated to be the tune of 3000 M.T. It is only a guess and the real figures may be much higher. When this reaches the consumer, the drug satans may net some 3000 billion dollars. An all that is black money. With this kind of money the drug merchants can run parallel armies and parallel governments.

As government agencies deal with drug peddling and smuggling with more and more stringent measures, drug demons invent new methods to carry on. Pieces of wood are hollowed out and filled with narcotics. Once filled, the hollow is shut and several coats of pigment and resin are given. X-rays and smelling dogs cannot detect it. In a container load of fruits, a few will be plastic, containing contraband. As port authorities hesitate to detain perishable goods, they will get through easily. Another mode n method of getting in narcotics is to soak the rubberised back of carpets with cocaine oil. One square foot can hold upto one kilogram of cocaine oil. On arrival at the destination they are removed to the drug lords' laboratories, the oil extracted and refined. Statues are also allowed out to tranship narcotics. Normally,

**World production of narcotics is estimated to be the tune of 3000 M.T. It is only a guess and the real figures may be much higher. When this reaches the consumer, the drug satans may net some 3000 billion dollars. And all that is black money. With this kind of money the drug merchants can run parallel armies and parallel governments.**

emperors create chaotic conditions on borders between states. So that drugs can be shipped

those devils are undetectable.

International governmental cooperation is the only way to stop this hideous traffics, as proved by Britain and USSR recently. A huge consignment of narcotics (4 tonnes of cannabis) was ready for shipment to Britain through Russia. Russians allowed it to pass through. On arrival in Britain, the government could follow it and smash the whole ring, putting all involved behind bars.

#### SAARC Meeting

**T**aking all this into consideration it was only appropriate that SAARC countries recently met to devise joint measures to counter the growing menace of drugs. They decided to cooperate in the war against drugs. Consequent to this decision, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) fighting the

# It Is War

By K.P.R. Pillai

drug meance met in Delhi. The conference decided to prepare as a first step, a directory of all NGOs fighting drug addiction in the region. Another measure decided upon was to intensify research and development in drugs and dead-diction tactics and to eliminate counter productive effects on target groups. It also decided to accelerate a campaign against smoking, which is a stepping stone to drug addiction. The most important decision was to strengthen the family as the basic factor in motivating de-addiction of the unfortunates who become slaves of the drug demon.

Here one must have a general idea of the factors that makes a person an addict.

An individual might start on drugs to alleviate the trauma of the fragmentation of his family or to relieve pain, to reduce tensions and stress to adopt to the social changes and for many other reasons. One may also start it for just the heck of it. And once one enters the world of drugs, it is a one way ticket to addiction.

Children and youth are more vulnerable to the wiles of drugs. An addict may degrade himself, resort to pimping and violence, even murder to obtain drugs of his desire. There in comes the significance of the family, society and traditions. This decision of SAARC NGOs is a welcome one. Social scientists and UN Study Groups have repeatedly stressed the importance of family and society in fighting off the drug menace.

#### International Efforts

**A**s in the case of Russia and Great Britain, India and Pakistan are cooperating in the prevention of drug trafficking. The USA seized 800 million dollars worth of narcotics in 1987, spending 16,000 million dollars to do it. While the American law makers proclaim zero tolerance to drugs and wanted to stop the traffic in less than two months. Using Army, Navy and Air Force and various federal agencies, in U.S. itself and in some western countries, a lobby has emerged clamouring for legalisation of drugs and Governments taking over the trade. They argue 1) that the battle against the unseen enemy is already lost, 2) the battle is proving to be prohibitively costly, 3) draconian laws infringe personal freedom and that the government has no right to prevent a citizen seeking pleasure, even if it is selfdestructive. They also point out that if drugs are made legal, the consequent law and order problem will disappear and only the public health problem will remain. They also argue that while alcohol, smoking and driving

kill millions in the world, drug deaths constitute only a very small percentage in relation to any one of them. Moreover, governments will know who the addicts are.

Opponents of this view argue that legalisation will increase the number of addicts, that it will dismember the social fabric and morality, that it will lead to an increase in crime and that it will cause an overall fall in the productivity of a nation. The "fordruggers" have yet to win a point.

One stumbling block in the fight against drugs in India is the Anglo-Saxon legal system that we inherited from the British. In some countries, mandatory punishment has been introduced for the peddling, possession, manufacture, etc. of a drug. Death is the penalty in some countries. In our country, too, the cry has been heard to award death penalty to drug traffickers. (There is no use in punishing an addict who is no more responsible for his action—his needs are compassion and control). The Government is considering the implications of enacting mandatory punishment to drug dealers. Otherwise, law will be put in the peculiar position of standing a mute witness to the destruction of society.

#### In India

**I**ndia has already taken various measures to fight the drug demon. As decided by SAARC NGOs meet, India is trying to reach addicts in their homes. We hope that families will make full use of this move. The conference has also suggested and the Government of India has accepted that traditional methods like spiritual guidance, psychotherapy, yoga, hypnosis, etc. be used in the war against drugs. National Institute of Social Defence under the Government of India will be training a cadre of social workers to deal with the problem. Their services will be available to NGOs also

#### Question Of Survival

**D**rugs have to be contained. It is essential for the survival of mankind, for the survival of everything that mankind has cherished since the dawn of history. It is essential for the survival of the addict, his family and society in general. The survival of states and nations is involved. Victory in this war is essential for the survival of culture. If the war is lost, it will be a sad day for the human race. Already endangered by the prospects of nuclear winters, ozone holes, AIDS, droughts and floods and melting polar ice, man has enough. Drugs should become a story of the past. We must win the war.....





Continued from page 4

see how many people have been put away for a year or two without any trial, without any justification, how much they have suffered subsequently emotionally and economically, how much bitterness has been created and has it really done any good at all either for the country or the well-being of the people. It does need an objective analysis to look at the pluses and minuses before we continue with this type of a Bill.

It has almost become a routine and, therefore, it has resulted and slipshod. They do not have to

carry out either proper investigation or prepare a case in order to go to the court to get a conviction. Laws like this give an opportunity to inefficient and dishonest law and order authorities to misuse them for self-aggrandisement. How can one blame the police forces when the Government itself is apt to misuse it for its own selfish and self-serving advantage? If this law is meant purely to deal with terrorists, as claimed by the Minister of State for Home Affairs,

## Govt. Cannot Browbeat People

I cannot understand why respectable Akali leaders whose faith in the integrity of the country is undoubted and who believe in non-violence, have been locked away under this Bill for such long periods. I may mention that even Sant Harchand Singh Longowal had been locked away under this Act.

The next point that I would like to mention is, I cannot understand why an Ordinance had to be promulgated once again in June when the House was in session earlier. This could have been introduced as a normal Bill as now. The Minister said that when the Parliament is not in session, the Government has the right to make laws. Agreed. But when a Bill can be foreseen during the Parliament session, why not pass it and let the Parliament discuss it, without first making it into an Ordinance and then presenting a *fait accompli* to the Parliament so that it has to be passed? This against smells manipulative tendencies of this Government, and I do consider it an insult to parliamentary democracy.

This Government has always been extraordinarily conscious about its international image. Now

that the cat is out of the bag, the grape seems to be sour.

My hon friend, Jaswant Singh, talked about Balbir Singh's case. It reminds me that it was not only Balbir Singh against whom this case was fabricated. They tried to bring in three other people to support this fabrication. When these three people, Avtar Singh, Gurbux Singh and Varinder Singh, refused to play the game, they were dealt with as follows. Avtar Singh was put away under the National Security Act for a year. His only crime was that he knew Balbir Singh. He was serving in the Reserve Bank of India and Balbir Singh used to go and meet him as Avtar Singh's younger brother and Balbir Singh were in the police together. When they could not persuade him to give a statement against Balbir Singh, he was put away under the National Security Act. When he came out after a year, the Reserve Bank of India served a show-caused notice on him and dispensed with his services which was totally illegal. The other two people, because they did not co-operate with the police, are being hounded out even today. Ever so often, police go and visit their houses and create problems

for them. Gurbux Singh's business is at a standstill. He had to sell his house because he was made so unpopular-deliberately by the police—with his neighbours.

Now, if this is the way the police is going to work and if this is the way the National Security Act is being used, you can well imagine whether this is an Act which is really being used to fight terrorism or it is being used to intimidate people to give false statements, to be a party to fabrication.

I do not wish to repeat what I have already said about the Government's record, shameful record, in relation to the November, 1984, victims and their keeping innocent people—those in the Jodhpur jail and others—incarcerated for years without bringing them in front of courts for trial or setting them free. But I would like to reiterate that this Bill and such other black laws create greater bitterness, greater alienation and greater loss of faith in the present Government. The Government cannot browbeat people into submission. The Government has to set its own house in order and rectify its wrong-doings. Only then, will it succeed and have the moral right to achieve success.

## Gen. Aurora's Letter To The Prime Minister

(From Our Correspondent)

Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora PVSM (Retd.) alongwith Sh. Balwant Singh Ramoowalia wrote a letter to Prime Minister on 29th July 1988 protesting against the registration of sedition case against the editor of *Ajit* for publishing some advertisements in his paper. As has been reported in the press the Prime Minister in his reply casted aspersions on the writers of that letter as also on other responsible members of Parliament on their sincerity about the integration of the country. Needless to say everyone who knows the style of functioning of the present government knows who is sincere to whom and what. Never the less in reply to Prime Minister's response Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora wrote a letter to Prime Minister on August 6, 1988, exposing the government's bankruptcy and insincerity. Given below is the text of Gen. Aurora's letter which is self-explanatory.

Dear Prime Minister,  
I thank you for your letter of August 2, 1988.

I wrote the letter of July 29 under reference in collaboration with Sardar B.S. Ramoowalia after due consideration. It is unfortunate that you have not appreciated the reasons for which we appealed to you.

The Editor of '*Ajit*' daily, S. Barjinder Singh, is a sensible, balanced and dependable person whose loyalty to the country is beyond question. Since he took over the editorship of this paper, he has been following a much more secular and responsible course. His paper is highly appreciated by the moderates throughout India. In addition, I felt that you were well-disposed towards him as you had invited him to your breakfast meeting. I would like to stress that Barjinder Singh cannot entirely ignore the atmosphere and circumstances under which he is living and publishing the paper. If the Punjab Government felt that such a notice should not have appeared, he could have been cautioned. There was no need to charge him for sedition.

Mr. Prime Minister, you must realise that even though the vast

majority of the Sikhs believe in the integrity of the country and are against Khalistan, they do justifiably feel aggrieved that your Government has not been just and fair to them. Leaving aside the question of the Accord, your Government has so far neither punished the guilty of November, 1984 carnage nor released the innocent who are incarcerated in the Jodhpur and other jails since long. You may have your constraints and reasons but the alienation which came about in 1984 continues to exist till today. We, therefore, do not and cannot feel the same way as you do about the Punjab situation. We also hold your Government responsible for the situation as it is today. Under these circumstances the Editor of the *Ajit*, should be commended for maintaining secular and national character of the paper. He is doing a constructive service under difficult circumstances and this should be appreciated. This paper is a voice of sanity in the Punjab. It should not be snuffed out.

It has been my endeavour to work sincerely and diligently towards communal harmony and integrity of the country since 1983. It can only be maintained if the Government is demonstratively alive to the sentiments and feelings of the people. This is sadly missing.

I am surprised that you have decided to berate publically our ability to understand the full implication of our action. You have also tried to cast aspersions on our sincerity about the integrity of the country. This was wholly uncalled for. May I say that you yourself have been guilty of trying to glean political advantage out of this issue which was put up to you in all sincerity to voice the general feelings of the people.

In the end, may I remind you that you had suggested as far back as July, 1986 that you wanted to discuss the Punjab situation and the Sikh problem with me. This has not materialised till today. Is it right to totally ignore a different point of view? I have no axe to grind neither personally nor politically.



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## Punjab And The Country

Continued from page 5

their hearts. Even today when the jathedars are being rejected and the misguided Sikhs given to terrorism without realising the real commands of the Guru and thus contributing to the desecration of the highest seat of Sikh religion, the leadership of the gurdwaras goes either to:

(a) moneyed people externally looking like Sikhs but having nothing in them as the spirit of the Khalsa;

(b) drinking, manouevring pseudo-politicians hankering after personal glory and selfishness;

(c) hired government agents having nothing to do with the purity of Guru's dictates.

And, more tragically, the educated Sikhs as a social entity bring out a leadership on their top which has had a good worldly record and has held positions like that of a Governor, an Administrator, a General, a Banker or a Businessman but do not care for their internal erosion. They fail to realise—and I place the highest emphasis on this failure—that without the internal devotion to the Guru and without noble commands of the Guru being fulfilled, we shall never come out straight in our dealings. That is where the bankruptcy of the Sikh leadership comes in. That is why whenever there is need for surrendering personal selfishness, and forging the strength of the community, these people shy away, whether these noble ones have been Maharajas, Chief Ministers or landowners.

Giani Sant Singh Maskin said at a meeting the other day that those who drink are not Sikhs; those who do not keep the word of the Guru in their hearts are not Sikhs; those who cannot keep the *Kakars* with them are not Sikhs. Then where are the Sikhs? Those who parade themselves as Sikhs or Sikh leaders are in fact drenched in personal gains and cannot think of the community's welfare. Those who mean well do not have the purity to follow the Guru's commands in life. After all, the ability to resist tyranny and pursue righteousness comes from God's name entrenched in one's heart. A more tragic state has befallen us. While we are vociferous in finding faults with others including the Punjab Government or the Central Government, we seldom look into our own hearts. For example, there is no order from the Central Government that Sikhs will not observe the commands of Sikh Gurus. There is no ban on Amritvela recitation of God's name. With great fanfare we have been fighting for the relay of Kirtan from Golden Temple, but how many of us listen to it at 4.30 a.m. when it is relayed everyday through Jalandar station of AIR upto 6 a.m.? Again, where is the notice

from the Government that Sikhs must drink, must make a fool of themselves, must create scenes in five star hotels in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib and they must quarrel among themselves in Gurdwaras throwing away turbans of each other and even try to kill each other. Where is the ban on Daswand that Guru Gobind Singh ordered for the Sikhs to take out for the service of the poor? Obviously, we ourselves are rotten from inside and it is certainly easier to put the blame on others. We cry about *maryada* and the government control but where is the *maryada* in our hearts about the commands. The Golden Temple or, for that matter, any temple, sheds its light in the hearts to create a temple within and if that temple's lights are not on, we will continue to be laughing stock of others as we are today.

There are two ways in which Punjab imbroglio could be sorted out even today. One, if the Government were sincere and honest, it would deal with our misguided people who talk of secessionism in a humane manner and not treat them as enemies. It would also treat the Sikh community as a part of the nation and not single it out for calumny and condemnation because of the political or human rights demands. Sikhs are as much entitled to demand their dues within the framework of the Indian Constitution as anyone else. Government can remove the sense of injustice immediately by releasing all those who are rotting in jails without trial and punishing the guilty of anti-Sikh carnage of November, 1984. After all, is it not clear that the Supreme Court has confirmed the death sentence of Satwant Singh—Beant Singh having been shot dead on the spot—for Indira Gandhi's murder? Then why is there no punishment for hundreds of criminals involved in killing of thousands of Sikhs? Government could also ensure—and they can do so, provided the police raj does not exult in abducting innocents and demanding bribes—that innocents are not harassed or tortured.

The second way is for the Sikhs themselves to become more committed to Sikh way of life. They were created principally to be transformed from frightened pigeons into men of steel to serve humanity and live righteously. They knew how to resist tyranny and without committing tyranny themselves they came out as darlings of the society. Where are men among Sikhs like Bhai Dayala, Bhai Mati Dass, Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Bhikhari, Bhai Kana-hiya? Are the paper-leaders that we have on top today, prepared to sacrifice their lives for righteousness? Are they prepared to live a

life of poverty so that the Sikh community can come into its own? We have to remember that chicanery cannot be matched with chicanery. Tyranny also cannot be met with tyranny. Either we must be able to show extraordinary love and compassion and sacrifice our lives like Guru Arjan or Guru Tegh Bahadur or we must develop extraordinary strength to overpower the tyrannical forces with *atma bal* and that can come only if our adherence to righteousness is absolute. There are no ifs and buts on the path of the Guru. And if we adhere to Guru's commands, there is no hurdle to our ruling the hearts of the people. Why can't our gurdwaras become the centres of seva to the entire population surrounding them instead of hankering after political bosses? It is well known that the Secretaries of Gurdwaras look towards political leadership to come and address the people in gurdwaras, rather than call only men of purity to share their inner-purity with them.

I write this with a sense of shame that Pr. Darshan Singh in one place sang *shabads* about the never-failing protection of the Guru—*chowki chagird hamare, gurka shabad rakhw are*—with various *pramans*. Contradiction-in-terms was visible in the form of his gun-toting personal bodyguard standing by the *shaurb-guru*, Guru Granth Sahib. Our deeds and words must match, must always match even at the cost of our lives. Why do we need to fill the pockets of raagis, kathakars and lecturers, with the mistaken notion of *bani-da-satkar*? After all contractual payments have been made by the gurdwara; why do we not pay attention to the Guru's commands by way of living the dictates of the Masters? Because it suits the raagi as well as ourselves, he does not mean to share with us the beauty of the Lord which is internal and we do not mean to share with the Lord our internal devotion and satisfy ourselves that we are acting religiously.

Can you imagine that our worldly respected people who lead us sometimes do not know *gurbani* adequately, do not know what is Sikhism except about the outer social significance? Would the Central Government get rid of its dishonest, farcical and even anti-national policies to save Punjab and the country. Sikhs do not want Khalistan. I am sure they cannot think of Pakistan as their friend. But the hurt of the Sikh youth who feel the sense of injustice have been hoodwinked by the Pakistanis to feel the way they feel. It is for the Government to keep its own citizens satisfied. Alienation created by the Government has led some misguided men to think of Pakistan and the Government has fallen into their trap by letting loose repression in the form of State terrorism.

Is it too much to expect that we should be able to produce at this critical juncture the like of Gandhi, whose political acumen was governed by spiritual purity? True,

there are men of straw in the Government, men of straw in the Opposition and men of straw in the Sikh leadership. But sometimes there comes a time in the state of the nation that right leadership appears at the right time. My plea is to the Sikhs and to the Sikh intelligentsia to get rid of their lethargy and their intellect which has made them materialistic and come to the path of the Guru to serve the community and the country. If Rajiv Gandhi has himself drowned the country into a guagmire of falsehood and chicanery, the Sikhs must save the country—as also themselves—by their devotion to the Gurus and their dedication to the nation. Window-dressing will not do. Our hearts must change from black-money to

saint-soldiership, from political springboards to spiritual heights and from opportunism to solid devotion.

Let me warn the nation. Perhaps, the Central Government with its vast resources in guns, media and propaganda, will succeed in browbeating the entire community into silence and fear. But you will be doing great disservice to the country for you will need Sikhs. They are loyal soldiers of India. Do not create permanent wounds. Wounded lions need immediate healing, not repression. The whole Sikh community is with the Central Government if it restores its credibility by re-establishing the sense of justice in the minds of the Sikh youth and the entire community.

## Moderates Vs Militants

Continued from page 3

lives. They have opted for the latter course.

However, given the past record of Mr. Talwandi, it is too early to say that he will be able to hold the party together. It may be recalled that he along with Mr. Tohra had gone to the Akal Takht with the complaint of corruption against Mr. Badal, who was then the Chief Minister, and was responsible for the downfall of the Badal ministry.

The Badal-Tohra group has taken a firm stand against the militants. It is a very happy sign. What remains to be seen is whether the tribal loyalties and personal ambitions of the Akali leaders will get the better of them or they will sink their differences and act cohesively to take the party and the Sikhs out of the present mess. It requires an act of statesmanship on their part. (1 September, 1988)

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## Baliapal Test Range

Continued on page 7

TABLE A

A Picture Of The Inhabitation Of The Proposed Missile Base Area

Area affected	400	sq. km.
Number of villages	126	
	(Baliapal-99, Bhograi-23, Basta-4)	
Number of families	11,950	
	(as per 1981 census)	
Population	1,05,700	
	(as per 1981 census)	
Number of betel-vines	30,000	
Number of coconut trees	1,50,000	
Number of Educational Institutions	134	
Number of other Government Institutions	51	
Places of Worship	120	

TABLE B

Annual Income From Various Sources:

Sources	Annual income in Rs.(crore)
Paddy crops	3.25
Betel vines	30.00
Coconut and other fruit	5.00
Inland fishing	2.00
Groundnut, oilseed & cashewnut	5.00
Sea fishing	32.00
Wood and bamboo	18.00
Bamboo baskets, mats and mattresses	2.00

TABLE C

Annual Income From Small And Cottage Industries

Industries	Annual Income in Rs.(crore)
Cair rope industry	0.25
Salt factories	1.00
Fish depots	0.25
Hauliers and oil mills	1.00
Fishing boats, nets and trawlers	5.00
Loss of labour due to closure of fishing, agriculture and betel vines	10.00

Source: G.A.S.S., Orissa.

Magrai blocks took place at Magadia village where the Kheparastra Ghati Birodhi Samiti (K.G.B.S. - Missile Valley Protest Committee) was formed. During the meeting, it was decided that each panchayat under the project will have a zonal office with office-bearers. Each village under the panchayat in turn will have a K.G.B.S. unit. Students', women's and teachers' wings of the K.G.B.S. were also formed. Following the meeting, barricades at all the entry points to the affected villages were put up.

People of the affected villages were served notice 4 under the Land Acquisition Act in 1986. But, they refused to accept the notice. People resisted the construction of approach roads and the installation of telephone lines. Day by day, the movement is increasingly turning into an organised shape. An interesting feature of the movement is the imposition of a 'Janta Curfew' (people's prohibitory orders) by the people which they will not lift until the government chooses another site for the test range. One will be surprised to know that no government official has dared to enter Baliapal for the past two years. People have refused to repay land revenue and

bank loans.

### Political Support

Right from its inception, the movement has received active support from various political parties including the Janta Party, CPI (M), the Socialist Unity Centre of India, and the Unity Centre of Communist Revolutionaries of India (Marxist-Leninist) (UCCRI-ML). On November 4, 1986, the activists of these parties tried to stage a dharna at the collectorate in Balasore. But, the police did not allow it. Next morning, a strong mob of nearly 15,000 gheraoed the police station.

India is not the only country which is building a defence establishment. Countries like U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Great Britain, China and France have established such ranges. It would be worthwhile to note that while establishing the test ranges, these countries consciously avoided densely populated area, eliminating displacement of people and destruction of cultivable lands. Instead, they selected sandy deserts, swampy and uninhabited lands for the establishment of test ranges.

U.S.A.'s long range missile test-

ing centre is situated at Cape Kennedy in the State of Florida on the Atlantic coast. This is the largest missile range centre in the world. It would be interesting to note that in establishing this centre, not a single man was displaced, not a single home was demolished and not even an acre of cultivable land was acquired. This centre was established on swampy lowlands which were totally uninhabited. The French Government has established its test range at French Guiana (nearly 8,000 miles away from France). The French Guiana has a total area of 35907 sq. miles with a population of 73012. Out of the total area, nearly 3000 sq. miles of area are marshy lowlands and uninhabitable. It is here that the French Government decided to establish its missile test and space centre. It would be interesting to know that the number of people who are likely to be displaced by the NTR project are more than the total population of French Guiana.

Similarly, the U.S.S.R. has also established its long range missile and space centre in Siberia which is almost uninhabited.

### The Insensitive Governments

The above examples clearly show that government in the world is so insensitive to its own people as the Indian Government because our government is insisting on selecting the most densely populated and fertile areas of Orissa.

It is not that the Government of India was unable to find a similar location elsewhere in the country. In fact, a number of locations such as Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dwarka on Gujarat coast, Sagar Island, etc. were suggested. But, the government rejected these locations on some plea or other like unhealthy marshy lands, proneness to cyclone and nearness to foreign countries. For instance, Dwarka was rejected for its nearness to Pakistan. The distance between Pakistan and Dwarka is about 100 miles and similarly the distance of Baliapal from Bangladesh is also 100 miles. Moreover, in this atomic age, distance has got no meaning at all.

Therefore, Baliapal is not only a question of the life of the farmers, the fishermen and other poor who will be displaced and rendered destitute. It is a political issue.

In the existing circumstances, it is very difficult to fight against such sensitive projects because those individuals and organisations who are highlighting the social and environmental costs of large dams and industries are often branded as "anti-development". In case of Baliapal, such people are likely to be branded as "anti-nationalists".

It remains to be seen how far people's fight against Baliapal test range will be successful.

## Post-Zia Pakistan

Continued from page 16

August 17, he did not suspend fundamental rights in the state and in fact the new President announced proudly that there was no need to suspend these rights. In fact many argue that it is for the first time that one comes across transfer of power in a democratic fashion, for even Bhutto had taken over as the Chief Martial Law Administrator from Yahya Khan and before that he had left Rome for home only after being assured by the top brass of the army that instead of imprisoning him Yahya was willing to hand over power to him.

Moreover, when the question is raised that if Ishaq Khan is not under the influence of the army why on earth did he constitute the Emergency Council comprising among others the three army chiefs, the reply that comes forth is that the enemies of the country have sneaked into the country and have even succeeded in killing the President. After all, it is argued, such developments are not entirely unknown even in tested democracies and such developments should be seen as exceptions only. Such political analysts also argue that both President Ishaq Khan and Mirza Aslam Beg, Chief of the army, are non-political people and have no political ambitions either. Relevantly, for the last 12 years Zia retained the post of the chief of the army staff and did not allow any parallel centre of influence to grow in the army.

Coming to the impending elections to the National Assembly on November 16, much importance is attached to General Aslam Beg's statement that the army has no political ambitions, its role being maintaining the law and order in the country and that the army wanted the elections to be held on schedule. More importantly, in his first ever Press conference as the President of Pakistan, Ishaq Khan promised to hold elections on November 16 and in fact even gave the impression, even if obliquely, of the elections being held on party basis. At his press conference on the night of August 20, Ishaq Khan expressed his

doubts that President Zia had said irreversibly that political parties would not be allowed to participate in November elections. The whole world knows what General Zia had said about the nature of elections on July 21. On the other hand, by stating that any confusion about the constitution has to be removed by the Supreme Court, President Ishaq Khan has given the impression that the days of constitutional supremacy are coming in Pakistan.

Relevantly, in the last days of General Zia's rule, the Supreme Court had ruled that even non-registered political parties would be able to participate in National Assembly elections. It was only after that President Zia had announced on July 21 that elections would be based on partylessness, for he feared the ascendance of Benazir to power (whose PPP is not registered with the Election Commission). Benazir challenged the July 21 announcement of General Zia ironically on the same fateful day when General Zia was killed. Now the Supreme Court has fixed October 2 as the date on which hearing on the issue would commence.

Presumably those who view the future of democracy in Pakistan as bright and for that who consider the possibility of National Assembly's elections being held on party basis do not appear to be standing on a weak wicket. Benazir seems to have learnt a lot from her experience, sufferings and follies. She is making balanced speeches both about the army and America, the two very important variables in Pakistan's domestic politics.

On balance, then, the politics of Pakistan at the moment presents a mixture of hope and despair. Time alone will give the final verdict; and after all, what is final in politics? However, if a democratic state emerges in the neighbourhood of India, more stability and security may become a possibility and the scrabble between the super-powers may be diminished gradually.

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From the House of

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## The Post-Zia Pakistan:

# Problems And Prospects

By Dr Parmanand

**A**fter the plane disaster of August 17 at Bahawalpur, President Zia-ul-Haq made his exit from the Pakistani political scene in the same sudden and unexpected manner, as he had emerged on the country's political scene on July 5, 1977 after removing the first ever elected Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, from power. Like other spheres of life, politics also does not allow total vacuum to be created, for with the exit of one holder and wielder of power, another comes and occupies the seats. If, however, any individual or a group of individuals stay in power for a relatively long time concentrating too much power in their hands and either do away with various institutional arrangements or devalue them thoroughly, politics certainly becomes uncertain and unpredictable.

Pakistani politics has, more or less, entered this very phase today. Political pundits and analysts seem to be working overtime nowadays both inside and outside Pakistan, for no political operator in that country seems to be exhibiting the cunningness or subtlety of General Zia to bring stability to the Pakistani political scene. It is altogether a different matter whether the political stability of Pakistani variety is worthwhile in the first place. Nor, on the other hand, there seems any sign of emergence or growth of a political culture in Pakistan which might result in the establishment of democracy in the country. Even in normal circumstances, it takes its own time and total.

On the whole, there are two schools of thought about the present and the emerging future political scene in Pakistan. According to one school of thought, the future of democracy is bleak in Pakistan. Another school opines that democracy is almost certain to be established in that country. Let us examine each of them in some detail.

### Democracy Under Siege

**T**hose who believe that the future of democracy is bleak in Pakistan, argue that the political culture and the socio-economic scenario of Pakistan are such as preclude the establishment of democracy. The army has come to occupy a predominant and preeminent position in today's Pakistani society and in coalition with the bureaucracy—which has more or less the same socio-economic background and same vested interest—it has established a cohesive oligarchy. It is not for nothing that out of 41 years of its existence Pakistan has been ruled by the army for 28 long years.

During his tenure, General Zia had completely shown that the army was his constituency and he had completely dedicated himself to nurse this constituency, even if he had no election to contest from this constituency. That General Zia succeeded in maintaining his constituency till his death leaves no scope for two opinions. More importantly, the way Zia had persuaded the vast chunk of the Pakistani society to join the mainstream of nation's life and the way he had reduced the number of his political opponents earned encomiums for him. By allowing the army men to earn more and more in the gulf and by precluding this privilege to be monopolized by any section of the army, Zia enhanced his popularity further and farther.

A Punjabi in terms of his ethnic identity (and Zia was never tired of talking of his attachment to Jullundhar in India's Punjab where he was born), Zia helped in both establishing and maintaining the predominance of the Punjabis in the Pakistani army. The circumstances do not appear such as would force the army to reduce its importance. One plane crash—even if it involves the most important leader of the state—does not change the socio-economic scenario and background of the state. The vested interests in no country give up their privileges for nothing. And this applies to Pakistan as well.

Those who cite the example of the army's returning to the barracks in 1971, forget that the morale of the Pakistani army had shattered in that year consequent upon its defeat at the hands of the Indian army. Pakistan had been divided into two. No such circumstances exist today. Even the political parties have failed to stand as a rock with a view to influencing public opinion in a manner to force the army to leave the scene. Analysts point out that in the absence of General Zia from the scene, it would be difficult for the political parties to even maintain the unity that existed in his life time. It is altogether a different matter that some signs of polarization among the various political parties are perceptible and visible in Pakistan of late.

Moreover, those who argue that America was a true friend of General Zia only and that would not apply to other rulers of Pakistan, tend to forget that willy nilly America would like to continue its support to the Afghan Mujahideens and for that very purpose would like to establish the equally strong friendship as with Zia. It is also argued in this connection that Pakistan will lose its *raison d'être* with-

out creating a hate and fear psychosis against India and for that arms and ammunition from America would always be needed.

### Bright Future For Democracy

**O**n the other hand, those pundits and analysts who want to prove that the establishment of genuine democracy is both possible and probable in Pakistan or for that matter the future of democ-

cracy is bright there, give a number of arguments to substantiate their viewpoint. The most important argument in this direction is that Ghulam Ishaq Khan came to occupy power as the President of the state in accordance with the constitutional provisions where it has been laid down that in case of the vacancy the Chairman of the Senate would take over as the President. It is worth mentioning here that the Senate is the upper chamber of Pakistan's Parliament

and is constitutionally permanent. Relevantly, when President Zia had dissolved the National Assembly, and dismissed the Junejo ministry on May 29, he had left the Senate in tact. Some analysts opine that Zia had wanted Ishaq Khan to succeed him in any eventuality of the nature of Aug 17.

Those optimistic of a bright future in Pakistan also opine that even though President Ishaq Khan promulgated emergency on

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